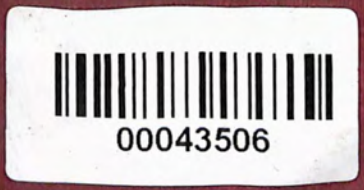
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THE

FEMALE POETS

OF

Great Britain,

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED:

WITH

COPIOUS SELECTIONS AND CRITICAL REMARKS.

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ac

BY

FREDERIC ROWTON,

AUTHOR OF

"THE DEBATER," "CAPITAL PUNISHMENT REVIEWED,"

ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE design of the Author, in writing the following pages, is to supply a want which must have been frequently experienced by every student of our literary annals; — the want of a History of our Female Poets.

Of our *male* Poets there are (to say the least of it) histories enough. Johnson, Campbell, Aikin, Anderson, Southey, and others, have done due honour to the genius of the rougher sex; and have left us — so far as they have gone — nothing to be desired.

But where are the memorials of the Female mind? In the records above alluded to, the Poetesses of Britain are either left unnoticed altogether, or mentioned with a flippant carelessness which is even more contemptuous than total silence. One or two small works (among which Mr. Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses* is the only one of merit and research) have been devoted to the subject, it is true; but even the worthiest of these productions is at best but incomplete.

It cannot surely be pretended that this neglect of our

Female Poets is attributable to any lack of genius in the sex. In these enlightened days it may certainly be taken for granted that women have souls: and further, that their souls have no small influence upon the world of thought and action. This admission made, it will follow that the mental efforts of woman have as good a claim as man's to be recorded; and that we should be deeply ashamed of ourselves for so long withholding from them that prominent place in the world's esteem which is so undoubtedly their due.

To tell the truth, we have already suffered severely for our folly in this matter. Had the soul of woman been allowed to operate more widely in the world, it cannot be doubted that humanity would have been far wiser, and better, and happier than it is. Man's coarser spirit has preponderated in the universe of life, and has made us much too gross, material, sensual, and violent. Our passions, sentiments, and beliefs, have all been too strong, too rough, too vehement; and we have gone through much strife and sorrow on this account. They should have been tempered, harmonised, smoothed down, softened, by contact with the mind of woman. Our mental atmosphere has contained too large a proportion of *one* of its elements; and hence it has neither been so pure nor so wholesome as it might have been. Only *one half* of the human soul has yet had a fair scope for development, — and that the coarser half; the other

has been circumscribed in its operations, and thus has been left to run to waste.

The Author confidently hopes that the work which he here presents to the reader will justify the position which he has assumed, and at least prove that the Poetical Faculty is not confined to one of the sexes. If it should only serve to direct critical attention to the subject, he will be fully satisfied; for he will know, that in such case our Female Poets will soon be as honourably appreciated as they unquestionably deserve to be.

The Author takes this opportunity to return his grateful thanks to those of our living Poetesses whose names occur in this volume, for the permission which they have so readily given him to make extracts from their works, and for the kind interest which they have, without exception, manifested in his undertaking.

London, 1848.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

In presenting to the reader a History of the Female Poets of Great Britain, the Author feels called upon to make a few general remarks upon the subject.

First, he would express his profound conviction that the Poetesses of our country have displayed a richness and depth of genius which may challenge the admiration, and demand the serious attention, of the world. The following pages offer, in the humble opinion of their Compiler, undeniable evidence in support of this belief; and further show that the female soul contains inexhaustible mines of precious jewels, the existence of which has as yet been scarcely recognised. The fact that this is almost the first book expressly devoted to the poetical productions of the British Female mind, tends strongly to prove that woman's intellect has been overlooked, if not despised, by us hitherto; and that it is high time we should awake to a sense of our folly and injustice. We have practically, if not professedly, avowed our belief that the thoughts of the feminine soul are not worth preserving: with how little reason we have done so, this work aims to show.

It may be true that woman's verse is less exciting than man's; and less "interesting" to the mass of readers: but I am inclined to think that this is so only because the mind of the world has been hitherto unduly stimulated, and therefore can only relish highly-seasoned food. War, Passion, Glory, and Sensual Pleasures have been the chief subjects of verse down to a comparatively recent period; and not until this false excitement has altogether passed away, can the gentler glow of woman's unobtrusive spirit be fairly felt. The qualities of woman's mind are the *stars* of the mental hemisphere: and during the time that is past, they have been outblazed by fiercer fires; but the heaven is now clearing, and the soft starlight is becoming visible.

I would go on to observe that other influences have tended to repress the poetical faculty of woman, and to keep it in the background of the universe. Our system of educating females has narrowed their sphere of observation, contracted their experience, and done its best to chain their intellects to the mere frivolities of life. Further, their poetical attempts have met with discouragement. I do not mean to say that they have not been flattered and applauded,—every Poetess has found her little coterie of admirers, who have fed her to surfeit with their unwholesome adulation; but I mean that the world has on the whole disregarded the mental efforts of woman, or else has looked upon them as something out of the proper sphere of the sex, and therefore to be petted and *protegéed* and lionized, rather

than honestly welcomed and carefully cultivated. If I am asked for proof of this assertion, I point to the fact that our female versifiers, though always applauded highly by contemporaries, have never yet been included in the list of our national Poets.

I know that of late this fault of neglect has been, in part, amended. During the last half-century our Poetesses have received a far healthier kind of regard: indeed their claim to distinction has been so far admitted as to make our wise men ask one another whether they should any longer permit such a word as Poet*ess* at all? But this in no degree disproves the assertion which I have made,—that, on the whole, woman's intellectual efforts have been in effect discouraged. Nay, even the present day, with all its boasted gallantry, has done much to repulse and retard woman's advancement. Have we not seen that when young Female Poets have by their genius placed themselves prominently before the public, they have been met with shameful malice and slander, and bidden back, wounded in heart, into privacy and retirement? Critics who could not deny their talents, have belied their characters; and a gossiping world has only been too ready to believe the calumniators.

Indeed, considering the hinderances in woman's way, the wonder is, not that she has done so little, but that she has done so much. To me there could not be a clearer proof of the strength and excellence of the female intellect, than is found in the fact that woman has per-

severed so long, and accomplished such great things, in spite of the difficulties she has had to encounter: and I cannot but think that the superior place which woman now holds in the world's esteem, as compared with her relative position in past ages, is due, not to man's justice, but to her own determination.

But, not to speculate further upon what woman's literary efforts might have been under more favourable circumstances, let us now speak of her works as we find them exemplified in the pages before us.

It may be at once admitted that woman has not soared so high as man has done into the realm of Poetry. We certainly have no female Shakspere. We have Poetesses who resemble him: Joanna Baillie is often like him; so is Miss Holford; so is Miss Mitford; so are many others who could be named: but the similarity is in single features, not in the whole character. We have no female Milton, either. Many of our lady Poets are sublime, many devotional: Mrs. Barbauld has Milton's solemn sense of adoration; Mrs. Rowe has his meditative calmness; Mrs. Hemans has his gentle, confiding humility: — but where is the female imagination that has mounted such stupendous heights, or penetrated such awful depths? We must remember, however, that there is but one Shakspere, but one Milton; and that men seem as little likely as women to furnish their counterparts.

But what other great British Poets are there with whom we have not Poetesses to compare? Have

we not a Byron in Miss Landon, a Cowper in the Countess of Winchelsea, a Spenser in Mrs. Tighe, a Goldsmith in Mrs. Grant, a Johnson in Hannah More, a Wycherly in Mrs. Centlivre, a Collins in Mrs. Radcliffe, a Coleridge in Mrs. Browning, a Wordsworth in Mary Howitt, a Scott (and more) in Joanna Baillie? Or if it will still be maintained that some, or even all, of these ladies fail to reach the full height of the Poets they resemble, where is to be found the dogmatist daring enough to say that the difference is sufficiently great to be set up as a mark of distinction between the one sex and the other? I cannot doubt that if woman had been permitted the enjoyment of the same opportunities as man, she would have presented to the world works as lofty in imagination and as noble in sublimity as any that have proceeded from the greatest of the other sex.

The doctrine of woman's intellectual inferiority is one which I cannot think upon without an impatience bordering on indignation. That our mothers, wives, sisters — that one half of the human race — should be deemed to be endowed with an inferior kind, or degree, of intelligence to that which animates the remaining portion of the species, is a theory so monstrous, that I can only wonder at even a savage age believing it. Woman intellectually inferior to man! Woman, who is man's helpmeet; woman, who has the care of the infant mind, and can impress it as she will; woman, who from the cradle to the grave has

power to command, to enslave, to direct, man's intellect at her pleasure! Is it credible that a belief so absurd should have gained footing in the world at all? It may be. But it is incredible that it should form a subject for debate in this, the nineteenth century. It is at least a satisfaction to think that, in addition to the immense amount of testimony which the records of all arts and sciences bear to woman's mental equality, the present volume furnishes a further overpowering proof to the same effect.

I am quite prepared to grant that the mental constitutions of the sexes are *different;* but I am not at all prepared to say that "difference" means "inferiority." It is easy enough to understand that the sphere of woman's duty requires powers altogether dissimilar from those which are needed by man; but that this is any proof of a smaller development of mind, I beg leave emphatically to deny. Woman's qualities may be less conspicuous, but they are quite as important; they may be less apparent, but they are quite as influential. Man has to bear outward, tangible, rule; and his faculties are necessarily of an authoritative, evident, external, commanding order. Woman has to bear invisible sway over the hidden mechanism of the heart; and her endowments are of a meek, persuasive, quiet, and subjective kind: seen rather in result than in action. Man rules the mind of the world: woman its heart.

To man belongs the sway of FORCE. To direct and

use actual strength, whether it be of the intellect or of the body, is his province. It is his to tame barbarism, to establish law, to control thought, to develop energy: and the senate, the platform, the mart, the pulpit, and the battle-field, are his scenes of action. It is his to explore, to analyse, to judge, to arrange, to provide. It is his to inquire, to test, to determine. Exertion, enterprise, action, and deliberation, are his duties. Reason is his weapon: and the establishment of Truth is the great task he has to perform.

To woman belongs the sway of INFLUENCE. Her province is to soften, round off, smooth down, the angularities of life and conduct: to act (gently, but unceasingly) upon the swift-beating heart of the world, soothing it into calmness when violent; mildly stimulating it into action when torpid; and refining, purifying and exalting its passions and aspirations when excited. Home is her empire, and affection her sceptre. It is hers to endure, to watch, to suggest, to inspirit, to reinvigorate, to sustain. It is hers to colour and perfume and beautify the way of life; to adorn existence, and make it musical. It is hers to resist and counteract the deadening influences of the world. Man goes forth to his labour day after day; he performs day after day the same cramping round of duties: it is woman's office to preserve him from becoming a mere piece of animated, but spiritless, mechanism. He comes in contact with villany and selfishness: it is hers to keep alive in his bosom the generous flame of virtue.

He falls in with the degraded and deceiving: it is hers to prevent their evil influence upon him, and to keep up a proper estimate of humanity. It is hers, when the world has disgusted him with its hollowness, to restore him by the tranquil delights of home. It is hers, when misfortune overtakes him, to cheer him with hope, and support his sinking spirit. It is hers to preserve in their purity the moral sentiments of his nature. It is hers, while intellectual knowledge makes him wise, by moral persuasion to render him good. It is hers at all seasons to inspire him with a purifying love for the Beautiful, and to anchor his soul firmly in the everlasting rock of Religion.

I repeat, then, that woman's sphere requires a *different* mental constitution from that of man, not an *inferior* one: and very different we find the intellectual faculties of the sexes to be. It is worth our while to note a few of these peculiarities.

Looking at the whole spiritual character, we see some such broad distinctions as the following.—Man is bold, enterprising, and strong; woman cautious, prudent, and stedfast. Man is self-relying and self-possessed; woman timid, clinging, and dependent. Man is suspicious and secret; woman confiding. Man is fearless; woman apprehensive. Man arrives at truth by long and tedious study; woman by intuition. He thinks; she feels. He reasons; she sympathises. He has courage; she patience. He soon despairs; she always hopes. The strong passions are his; ambition, love of conquest, love

of fame. The mild affections are hers; love of home, love of virtue, love of friends. Intellect is his; heart is hers. In the religious sentiments they are equally unlike. His is the religion of the understanding; hers the religion of faith. Man must have a creed; woman's piety is independent of all rubrics.

Or taking the mere Intellectual faculties of the female mind, apart from the whole spiritual organisation, we find a marked difference from those of man. The qualities of the Female Intellect seem to be rather negative than positive: they appear to be fitted more for passive endurance than for aggressive exertion. They can grasp less; but they can hold longer. Just as woman's physical frame is formed for smaller but more continuous labour than man's, so her mental constitution seems less competent to violent than to sustained action. She appears to have inferior force, but greater evenness: not so much energy, but more equability, of character.

Woman's intellectual perceptions are infinitely quicker than man's. She sees in a moment. Incongruities, resemblances, differences, characteristics, are intuitively and instantly perceived by her. The whole range of her mental faculties appears to be apter, readier, quicker, than man's. She has a finer perception of colour; a more correct ear for tune; a truer taste; a readier sensibility to beauty in form; a more sensitive appreciation of melody. Man's intellectual perceptions are comparatively slow. He sees farther, but his vision is not so instantaneous. I think his insight into essences

is truer than her's: but I believe that she has a better appreciation of surfaces. She sees at once, and is satisfied with that; he distrusts first appearances, and inquires into their essential qualities.

The Poetical Selections which form the bulk of this work will, I think, amply illustrate and fully prove the distinctions which I have attempted to draw in the preceding paragraphs. They will show, if I mistake not, that while Man's intellect is meant to make the world stronger and wiser, Woman's is intended to make it purer and better. The reader will not fail to notice how rarely our Female Poets have addressed themselves to the mere understanding, and on the other hand how constantly they have sought to impress the feelings, of the race; how little they have endeavoured to increase our wisdom, and how much they have laboured to promote our virtue. It is for man to ameliorate our condition; it is for woman to amend our character. Man's Poetry teaches us Politics; Woman's, Morality. In all the Poems contained in this Volume, it would be difficult to find a passage written to accelerate man's political advancement: whilst every page will display some effort to stimulate his moral progress. In one place we shall see a Katherine Philips exhibiting the deceitfulness of Pleasure; in another, a Mary Chandler proclaiming the blessings of Temperance; in a third, a Lady Carew enjoining the duty of Forgiveness; in a fourth, an Amelia Opie teaching the sinfulness of War; in a fifth, a Mary Howitt sweetly sympathising with

the wants and sufferings of the Poor; in all, we shall find a cheerful love for Humanity, a noble trust in Virtue, and a hoping, clinging, earnest Piety. Woman's mind not equal in strength to man's! Can we venture to say that man's mind is equal in value to woman's?

It is not, however, to promote a rivalry between the sexes that these pages are written. They aim, not at separating the two half minds of the world, but at making them act in concert and unison. Single, they are incomplete; but together they are powerful for every kind of good.

Man without woman is strong, but unenduring; courageous, but impatient; enterprising, but incautious. He is self-relying, but easily deceived; confident, but soon cast down; undertakes much, but is soon wearied. Left to itself, his hope fails almost at its birth; his faith speedily turns to doubt; his mind preys upon itself; he becomes gloomy, suspicious, and misanthropical.

On the other hand, woman without man is timid, feeble, apprehensive, and defenceless. The first shock of doubt or affliction overcomes her; and afterwards she hopes beyond reason. Evil preys upon her unresisted; she confides to be deceived: her affections become idolatries; her sympathies, weaknesses; and her religion grows into superstition.

Thus the perfect mental character is only formed by the union of the two incomplete parts. United, there is strength with endurance, enterprise with caution,

courage with patience. Self reliance is moderated by dependence. Thought is aided by feeling. Reason is confirmed by sympathy. Reliance links itself with belief, ambition with love, faith with piety; despondency meets with cheerfulness, affliction with consolation, and despair with hope.

It is our policy, therefore, no less than our duty, to admit and develop, in their fullest extent, the noble intellectual gifts which nature has bestowed on woman. Urged by a blinding pride, or a ridiculous envy, we have for ages denied her right to share with us the throne of intellect; and, as has before been urged, we have paid a heavy penalty for our folly. Let us amend our fault for the future. Let us give woman's mind that free scope for its exertions which we have so long refused it. And let us gratefully recognise in woman, a partner, not a rival, in the mental race; a fellow worker, and that a pure and courageous one, in the great task of enlightening and elevating the whole family of man!

FREDERIC ROWTON.

THE

FEMALE POETS

OF

Great Britain.

JULIANA BERNERS.

1460.

THE first British Poetess of whom we have any record is the lady whose name is mentioned above; Juliana, daughter of Sir James Berners, or Barnes, of Roding, in Essex, Knight; and sister of Richard, first Lord Berners. She flourished in the middle of the fifteenth century; about fifty years after Chaucer and Gower. She received what at that time was considered a learned education; and eventually became Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, near St. Albans. Her literary productions consist of three tracts, one on Hunting, another on Hawking, and the third on Armory, or Heraldry: they are to be found in *The Book of St. Albans, printed at Westminster, by Wynkyn de Worde*, 1496.

Her style is excessively coarse and unfeminine, and wholly inconsistent with her sacred calling; but the barbarism of the times is a sufficient, if not a complete excuse for her. From the era of Richard the Third much refinement cannot be expected.

The tract on *Hunting*, which is the only one in rhyme, furnishes the following short extract: quite long enough, I am sure, in the opinion of the reader.

OPENING OF THE POEM.

Mi dere sones, where ye fare, be frith, or by fell,
Take good hede in his tyme how Tristrem wol tell;
How many maner bestes of venery there were,
Listenes now to oure Dame, and ye shullen here.
Ffowre maner bestes of venery there are,
The first of hem is a hert, the second is an hare;
The boor is one of tho,
The wolff, and no mo.
And whereso ye comen in play or in place,
Now shal I tel you which ben bestes of chace;
One of tho a buk, another a doo,
The ffox, and the marteryn, and the wilde roo;
And ye shall, my dere sones, other bestes all,
Where so ye hem finde, rascall hem call,
In frith or in fell,
Or in fforest, y yow tell.
And to speke of the hert, if ye wil hit lere,
Ye shall cal him a calfe at the first yere;

The seconde yere a broket, so shal he be,
The third yere a spayard, lerneth this at me;
The iiii yere calles hem a stagge, be eny way
The fift yere a grete stagge, my dame bade you say.

The *Epilogue* to this Book of Hunting is not without merit.

TO HAVE A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

A faithful friend would I fain find,
To find him there he might be found;
But now is the world wext so unkind,
That friendship is fall to the ground.
Now a friend I have found,
That I will neither ban ne curse:
But of all friends in field or town,
Ever gramercy mine own purse.

My purse it is my privy wife:
(This song I dare both sing and say:)
It parteth men of muche strife,
When every man for himself shall pay.
As I ride in rich array,
For gold and silver men will me flourish;
By this matter I dare well say,
Ever gramercy mine own purse.

As I ride with gold so rede,
And have to do with landys law,

Men for my money will make me speed,
And for my goods they will me knowe :
More and less to me will draw
Both the better and the worse ;
By this matter I say *in sawe* *
Ever gramercy mine own purse.

It fell by me upon a time,
As it hath done by many one mo,
My horse, my neat, my sheep, my swine,
And all my goods, they fell me fro :
I went to my friends and told them so,
And home again they bade me truss :
I said again when I was wo,
Ever gramercy mine own purse.

Therefore I rede you, sires all,
To assay your friends or you have need ;
For an ye come down, and have a fall,
Full few of them for you will grede.
Therefore assay them every one,
Both the better and the worse.—
Our Lord, that shope both sun and moon,
Send us spending in our purse!

Should the reader desire a further acquaintance with the works of Lady Berners, he cannot do better than consult Mr. Haslewood's Reprint of *The Book of St. Albans*, before referred to.

* Proverbially.

QUEEN ANNE BOLEYN.

1507—1536.

THE following pathetic and womanly verses have been ascribed to this ill-fated lady. Sir John Hawkins, in his *History of Music*, vol. iii. p. 30., says that they were communicated to him by "a very judicious antiquary, lately deceased." Whether this statement is sufficient, however, to establish Anne Boleyn's claim to the authorship of the production, the reader must decide. I believe that the verses have never been attributed to any other person.

Defiled is my name full sore,
  Through cruel spite and false report,
That I may say, for evermore,
  Farewell, my joy! adieu, comfort!
For wrongfully ye judge of me,
  Unto my fame a mortal wound;
Say what ye list, it will not be,
  Ye seek for that cannot be found.

O Death! rock me on sleep!
  Bring me a quiet rest:
Let pass my very guiltless ghost
  Out of my careful breast:
Toll on the passing bell,
Ring out the doleful knell,
Let the sound my death tell,

For I must die,
There is no remedy,
For now I die.

My paines who can express?
Alas! they are so strong,
My dolour will not suffer strength
My life for to prolong:
Toll on the passing bell, &c.

Alone, in prison strong,
I wail my destiny;
Wo worth this cruel hap that I
Should taste this misery.
Toll on the passing bell, &c.

Farewell my pleasures past,
Welcome my present pain;
I feel my torments so increase,
That life cannot remain.
Cease now the passing bell,
Rung is my doleful knell,
For the sound my death doth tell:
Death doth draw nigh,
Sound my end dolefully,
For now I die.

It is as well, perhaps, to say that in the above Lines, the spelling is modernised; and that the same course is followed, as far as possible, in all the extracts from the older writers.

ANNE ASKEWE.

1520—1546.

ANNE ASKEWE was the daughter of Sir William Askewe, or Ayscough, of Kelsey, in the county of Lincoln; and was born in the year 1520. Her natural talents were great, and she received a learned education. Her family followed the Roman Catholic faith, and by her father's desire (although against her own inclination) she married a Roman Catholic gentleman, named Ryme. Her mind, always of a deeply religious cast, after much thought became deeply impressed with the belief that the Roman Catholic religion was not the true one, and she abjured it in favour of Protestantism. Upon this, her husband drove her from his house, and she found refuge with some friends in London. While in that city, she sought to interest the King (Henry the Eighth) in her behalf, through Queen Katherine (Parr); but in vain. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, caused her to be seized and committed to prison on a charge of heresy. After a short detention, however, she was liberated. But in a little while she was again arrested, thrown into the Tower, found guilty of heresy, and condemned to die at the stake.

Her demeanour, throughout the whole proceedings, was in the highest degree heroic; and affords a striking proof of the strength of the religious sentiment in woman. A contemporary writer (Mr. Loud, of Lin-

coln's Inn) says of her—"I must needs confess of Mrs. Askewe, now departed to the Lord, that the day afore her execution, and the same day also, she had an angel's countenance and a smiling face; though when the hour of darkness came, she was so racked, that she could not stand, but was holden up between two serjeants." On being fastened to the stake, she was asked for the last time to recant; the royal pardon being offered her if she would do so. Her reply was, "I do not come here to deny my Lord and Master." The faggots were thereupon lighted, and she was burnt to ashes. This was in 1546, in the twenty-sixth year of her age.

After her last examination in Newgate, she composed the following lines: the true martyr spirit is visible in every word of them:—

Like as the armëd knight
  Appointed to the field,
With this world will I fight,
  And faith shall be my shield.

Faith is that weapon strong
  Which will not fail at need;
My foes therefore among
  Therewith will I proceed.

As it is had in strength
  And force of Christës way,
It will prevail at length,
  Though all the devils say nay.

Faith in the fathers old
Obtained righteousness,
Which make me very bold
To fear no world's distress.

I now rejoice in heart,
And hope bid me do so,
For Christ will take my part
And ease me of my woe.

Thou say'st, Lord, whose knock,
To them wilt thou attend;
Undo therefore the lock,
And thy strong power send.

More enemies now I have
Than hairs upon my head;
Let them not me deprave,
But fight thou in my stead.

On thee my care I cast,
For all their cruel spite,
I set not by their hast,
For thou art my delight.

I am not she that list
My anchor to let fall;
For every drizzling mist,
My ship substantial.

Not oft use I to write
In prose nor yet in rhyme,

Yet will I show one sight
That I saw in my time.

I saw a royal throne
Where Justice should have sit,
But in her stead was one
Of moody cruel wit.

Absorb'd was righteousness
As of the raging flood:
Satan in his excess
Suck'd up the guiltless blood.

Then thought I, Jesus, Lord,
When thou shalt judge us all,
Hard is it to record
On these men what will fall.

Yet, Lord, I thee desire,
For that they do to me,
Let them not taste the hire
Of their iniquity!

It would be difficult, I think, to find a more illustrious instance of consistent Christian faith than is displayed in these Lines. They present a noble evidence of woman's exalted courage in the hour of trial, and of the pure and forgiving spirit with which she can endure persecution.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

1533—1603.

AMONG the many vanities of this royal lady, the most innocent, perhaps, was her desire of shining as a Poet: whether she *does* shine or not, the present writer will not undertake to determine. That she gained very extravagant praises from contemporary critics is not perhaps surprising: Royalty enters into the lists of Literature so rarely, that a few extra-sweet plaudits may be pardoned when it makes its appearance there.

I transcribe first the Lines written by the Royal Poet when a Prisoner at Woodstock.

Oh, Fortune! how thy restless wavering state
  Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit!
Witness this present prison, whither fate
  Could bear me, and the joys I quit:
Thou causedest the guilty to be loos'd
From bands, wherein are innocents inclos'd:
  Causing the guiltless to be strait reserv'd,
  And freeing those that death had well deserv'd.
But by her envy can be nothing wrought,
So God send to my foes all they have thought.

Puttenham, in his *Art of English Poesy*, speaking of the rhetorical figure Exargasia, or the Gorgeous, says, "I find none example in English metre so well maintaining

this figure as this ditty of her Majesty's own making, passing sweet and harmonical: which figure being, as his very original name purporteth, the most beautiful and gorgeous of all others, it asketh in reason to be reserved for a last compliment, and decyphered by a lady's pen, herself being the most beautiful, or rather beauty of queens." It is to be feared that Mr. Puttenham's loyalty sent to sleep his taste.

The poem relates to the plotters in favour of Mary, Queen of Scots.

The doubt of future foes
  Exiles my present joy,
And wit me warns to shun such snares
  As threaten mine annoy.
For falsehood now doth flow,
  And subject faith doth ebb;
Which would not be if reason ruled,
  Or wisdom weav'd the web.
But clouds of toys untried
  Do cloak aspiring minds;
Which turn to rain of late repent,
  By course of changed winds.
The top of hope suppos'd
  The root of ruth will be;
And fruitless all their graffed guiles,
  As shortly ye shall see.
Then dazzled eyes with pride,
  Which great ambition blinds,
Shall be unseal'd by worthy wights,
  Whose foresight falsehood finds.

The Daughter of Debate*,
That eke discord doth sow,
Shall reap no gain where former rule
Hath taught still peace to grow.
No foreign banish'd wight
Shall anchor in this port;
Our realm it brooks no strangers' force,
Let them elsewhere resort.
Our rusty sword with rest
Shall first his edge employ,
Shall poll their tops that seek
Such change, and gape for joy.

It would seem that Her Majesty —

"Whose *realm* would brook no stranger force,"

had a *heart* of more yielding materials. Tyrant as she was, Queen Elizabeth did homage to a greater tyrant still, — the name of him — LOVE. The candid critic must confess that "the beauty of queens" *whines* somewhat under the influence of *la belle passion.* The following woe-begone stanzas were written on the departure of some favourite from court: —

I grieve and dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, but inwardly do prate:
I am, and not; I freeze, and yet am burn'd,
Since from myself, my other self I turn'd.

* Mary, Queen of Scots.

My care is like my shadow in the sun,
  Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it;
Stands and lies by me, does what I have done;
  This too familiar care does make me rue it:
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be supprest.

Some gentler passions slide into my mind,
  For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind,
  Let me or float or sink, be high or low:
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant.

Signed, "*Finis, Eliza. Regina*, upon
Moun . . . . . 's departure."

One cannot read this passage without feeling that whatever may have been Queen Elizabeth's poetical powers, she at least had not the faculty of self-portraiture. For when she says of herself —

"That she is *soft*, and made of *melting snow*,"

one cannot, with all the charity in the world, coincide with her. Had the royal Limner compared herself to *ice* instead of snow, she might have won our assent to her proposition: but "melting snow"——no, no! that is not by any means the verdict of History!

MARY, COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

1560—1621.

THIS lady was a sister of Sir Philip Sidney, and appears to have been a most excellent and accomplished person. Spenser mentions her as

> —— "most resembling, both in shape and spirit,
> Her brother dear:"

and Sir Philip dedicated his *Arcadia* to her.

She wrote largely, both in prose and verse, and was a most generous patron of literature.

Her poems display no inconsiderable amount of learning, and are characterised by much elegance and grace. She assisted her brother in a translation of the Psalms, which was first printed so recently as 1823.

A DIALOGUE

Between two Shepherds, Thenot and Piers, in praise of Astræa.

THENOT.

I sing divine Astræa's praise,
O Muses! help my wits to raise,
And heave my verses higher.

PIERS.

Thou need'st the truth but plainly tell,
Which much I doubt thou can'st not well,
Thou art so oft a liar.

THENOT.

If in my song no more I show,
Than heaven and earth and sea do know,
Then truly I have spoken.

PIERS.

Sufficeth not no more to name;
But being no less, the like, the same,
Else laws of truth be broken.

THENOT.

Then say she is so good, so fair,
With all the earth she may compare,
Not Momus' self denying.

PIERS.

Compare may think where likeness holds,
Nought like to her the earth enfolds,
I look'd to find you lying.

THENOT.

Astræa sees with Wisdom's sight,
Astræa works by Virtue's might,
And jointly both do stay in her.

PIERS.

Nay, take from them, her hand, her mind,
The one is lame, the other blind;
Shall still your lying stain her?

THENOT.

Soon as Astræa shows her face,
Straight every ill avoids the place,
And every good aboundeth.

PIERS.

Nay, long before her face doth show,
The last doth come, the first doth go;
How loud this lie resoundeth.

THENOT.

Astræa is our chiefest joy,
Our chiefest guard against annoy,
Our chiefest wealth, our treasure.

PIERS.

Where chiefest are, there others be,
To us none else but only she;
When wilt thou speak in measure?

THENOT.

Astræa may be justly said,
A field in flowery robe array'd,
In season freshly springing.

PIERS.

That spring endures but shortest time,
This never leaves Astræa's clime;
Thou liest instead of singing.

THENOT.

As heavenly light that guides the day,
Right so doth shine each lovely ray,
That from Astræa flieth.

PIERS.

Nay, darkness oft that light inclouds,
Astræa's beams no darkness shrouds;
How loudly Thenot lieth!

THENOT.

Astræa rightly term I may,
A manly palm, a maiden bay,
Her verdure never dying.

PIERS.

Palm oft is crooked, bay is low;
She still upright, still high doth grow;
Good Thenot leave thy lying!

THENOT.

Then, Piers, of friendship tell me why,
My meaning true, my words should lie,
And strive in vain to raise her?

PIERS.

Words from conceit do only rise,
Above conceit her honour flies;
But silence, nought can praise her.

CHORUS FROM THE TRAGEDY OF ANTONY.

1595.

The boiling tempest still
Makes not sea-waters foam,
Nor still the northern blast
Disquiets quiet streams,
Nor who, his chest to fill,
Sails to the morning's beams,
On waves wind tosseth fast,
Still keeps his ship from home.

Nor Jove still down doth cast,
Inflamed with bloody ire,
On man, on tree, on hill,
His darts of thundering fire:
Nor still the heat doth last
On face of parched plain,
Nor wrinkled cold doth still
On frozen furrows reign.

But still as long as we
In this low world remain,
Mishaps, our daily mates,
Our lives do entertain;
And woes which bear no dates,
Still perch upon our heads;
None go, but straight will be
Some greater in their steads.

Nature made us not free,
When first she made us live;
When we began to be,
To be began our woe;
Which growing evermore,
As dying life doth grow,
Do more and more us grieve,
And tire us more and more.

O blest who never breath'd,
Or whom, with pity moved,
Death from his cradle 'reav'd,
And swaddled in his grave.
And blessed also he
(As curse may blessing have),
Who low, and living free,
No prince's charge hath prov'd.

By stealing sacred fire,
Prometheus, then unwise,
Provoking gods to ire,
The heap of ills did stir;
And sickness, pale and cold,
Our end which onward spur
To plague our hands, too bold,
To filch the wealth of skies.

In heaven's hate since then,
Of ill with ill enchain'd,
We race of mortal men
Full fraught our breasts have borne;

And thousand, thousand woes
Our heavenly souls now thorn,
Which free before from those,
No earthly passion pain'd.

War and war's bitter cheer
Now long time with us stay,
And fear of hated foe
Still still increaseth sore.
Our harms worse daily grow:
Less yesterday they were
Than now, and will be more
To-morrow than to-day.

That this lady was much esteemed in her own day, we may fairly infer from her Epitaph: written by Ben Jonson:

EPITAPH.

Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death! ere thou hast slain another
Learn'd, and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

ELIZABETH MELVILL,

1603,

WAS daughter of Sir James Melvill of Halhill, and wife of Colvill of Culross. She wrote *Ane Godlie Dreame, compiled in Scottish metre,* the first edition of which appeared at Edinburgh in 1603. In the following quotation, the language has been Anglicised.

FROM ANE GODLIE DREAME.

I lookëd down, and saw a pit most black,
Most full of smoke, and flaming fire most fell;
That ugly sight made me to fly aback,
I fear'd to hear so many shout and yell:
I him besought that he the truth would tell —
Is this, said I, the Papists' purging place,
Where they affirm that silly souls do dwell,
To purge their sin, before they rest in peace?

The brain of man most surely did invent
That purging place, he answer'd me again:
For greediness together they consent
To say that souls in torment may remain,
Till gold and goods relieve them of their pain.
O spiteful sprites that did the same begin!
O blindëd beasts, your thoughts are all in vain,
My blood alone did save thy soul from sin.

This pit is Hell, where through thou now must go,
There is thy way that leads thee to the land:
Now play the man, thou need'st not tremble so,
For I shall help and hold thee by the hand.
Alas! said I, I have no force to stand,
For fear I faint to see that ugly sight;
How can I come among that baleful band?
Oh, help me now, I have no force nor might!

Oft have I heard that they that enter there
In this great gulf, shall never come again:
Courage, said he, have I not bought thee dear?
My precious blood it was not shed in vain.
I saw this place, my soul did taste this pain,
Or ere I went into my Father's gloire;
Through must thou go, but thou shalt not remain,
Thou need'st not fear, for I shall go before.

I am content to do thy whole command,
Said I again, and did him fast embrace:
Then lovingly he held me by the hand,
And in we went into that fearful place.
Hold fast thy grip, said he, in any case
Let me not slip, whatever thou shalt see;
Dread not the death, but stoutly forward press
For Death nor Hell shall never vanquish thee.

His words so sweet did cheer my heavy heart,
Incontinent I cast my care aside:
Courage, said he, play not a coward's part,
Though thou be weak, yet in my strength confide.

I thought me blest to have so good a guide,
Though I was weak I knew that he was strong;
Under his wings I thought me for to hide,
If any there should press to do me wrong.

Into that Pit, when I did enter in,
I saw a sight which made my heart aghast;
Poor damnëd souls, tormented sore for sin
In flaming fire were burning fierce and fast:
And ugly sprites, and as we thought them past,
My heart grew faint and I began to tire;
Ere I perceived, one seizëd me at last
And held me high above a flaming fire.

The fire was great, the heat did pierce me sore,
My faith grew weak, my grip was wondrous small,
I trembled fast, my fear grew more and more,
My hands did shake that I him held withal.
At length they loos'd, then they began to fall,
I cried, O Lord! and caught him fast again;
Lord Jesus, come! and take me out of thrall:
Courage, said he, now thou art past the pain.

With this great fear, I staggerëd and woke,
Crying, O Lord! Lord Jesus come again!
But after this no kind of rest I took,
I press'd to sleep, but that was all in vain:
I would have dream'd of pleasure after pain,
Because I know I shall it find at last:
God grant my guide may still with me remain;
It is to come that I believed was past.

LADY ELIZABETH CAREW.

1613.

WHO this lady was is not altogether certain. She is generally understood to have been the wife of Sir Henry Carew, or Cary. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and was called, by John Davis, of Hereford, in the dedication prefixed to his *Muses' Sacrifice*, or *Divine Meditations*, "a darling, as well as patroness, of the muses."

The chief, indeed only, work attributed to her is *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry, written by that learned, virtuous, and truly noble lady*, E. C., 1613: a play abounding in fine womanly touches of feeling and sentiment. I extract the

CHORUS TO THE FOURTH ACT.

The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to revenge an injury:
For who forgives without a further strife,
His adversary's heart doth to him tie.
And 'tis a firmer conquest, truly said,
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,
To yield to worth it must be nobly done;
But if of baser metal be his mind,
In base revenge there is no honour won.

Who would a worthy courage overthrow,
And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great and cannot yield;
Because they cannot yield it proves them poor;
Great hearts are task'd beyond their power, but seld*
The weakest lion will the loudest roar.
Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn,
To scorn to owe a duty overlong;
To scorn to be for benefits forborne,
To scorn a lie, to scorn to do a wrong.
To scorn to bear an injury in mind,
To scorn a free-born heart slave-like to bind.

But if for wrongs we needs revenge must have,
Then be our vengeance of the noblest kind;
Do we his body from our fury save,
And let our hate prevail against our mind?
What can 'gainst him a greater vengeance be,
Than make his foe more worthy far than he?

Had Mariam scorn'd to leave a due unpaid,
She would to Herod then have paid her love;
And not have been by sullen passion sway'd.
To fix her thoughts all injury above
Is virtuous pride. Had Mariam thus been proud,
Long famous life to her had been allow'd.

* Seldom.

LADY MARY WROTH,

1621,

Was the daughter of Robert, Earl of Leicester (a younger brother of Sir Philip Sidney), and the wife of Sir Robert Wroth. In 1621 she published a romance, called *Urania*, interspersed with poetry. It was to Lady Wroth that Ben Jonson dedicated *The Alchemist*.

From the Romance to which I have alluded I make the following selections. —

SONG.

Who can blame me if I love,
Since Love before the world did move?
When I lov'd not, I despair'd,
Scarce for handsomeness I car'd;
Since so much I am refined,
As new-framed of state and mind,
Who can blame me if I love,
Since Love before the world did move?

Some in truth of Love beguil'd,
Have him blind and childish styl'd;
But let none in these persist,
Since so judging judgment miss'd.
Who can blame me?

Love in chaos did appear;
When nothing was, yet he seem'd clear:
Nor when light could be descried,
To his crown a light was tied.
Who can blame me?

Love is truth and doth delight,
Whereas Honour shines most bright:
Reason's self doth Love approve,
Which makes us ourselves to love.
Who can blame me?

Could I my past time begin,
I would not commit such sin,
To live an hour, and not to love;
Since Love makes us perfect prove.
Who can blame me?

SONG.

Love, a child, is ever crying;
Please him, and he straight is flying;
Give him, he the more is craving,
Never satisfied with having.

His desires have no measure;
Endless folly is his treasure;
What he promiseth he breaketh,
Trust not one word that he speaketh

He vows nothing but false matter;
And to cozen you will flatter;
Let him gain the hand, he'll leave you,
And still glory to deceive you.

He will triumph in your wailing;
And yet cause be of your failing:
These his virtues are, and slighter
Are his gifts, his favours lighter.

Fathers are as firm in staying,
Wolves no fiercer in their preying;
As a child, then, leave him crying,
Nor seek him so given to flying.

The reader will not fail to notice the remarkably contradictory sentiments which these two poems present upon that important subject, the character of Cupid. Like the lawyer in Cowper's *Eyes and Nose*, the fair author pleads upon both sides of the question. In the one song we are told that

"Love, *a child*, is ever crying,"—

and that we are to

"Trust not *one* word that he speaketh:"

in the other we are informed that Love is *truth*, and that those who call him childish

"Have, so judging, judgment miss'd."

Which doctrine are we to believe?

ANNE, COUNTESS OF ARUNDEL.

1630.

THIS lady was the sister of Thomas, Lord Dacre, and the wife of Philip, Earl of Arundel, who died in the Tower of London, in 1595. The following verses, written by her on the cover of a letter, have been preserved by Mr. Lodge (Illustrations of British History, vol. iii.), who is of opinion that they were called forth by the death of her husband.

In sad and ashy weeds I sigh,
  I groan, I pine, I mourn;
My oaten yellow reeds I all
  To jet and ebon turn.
My watery eyes, like winter's skies,
  My furrow'd cheeks o'erflow:
All heavens know why, men mourn as I,
  And who can blame my woe?

In sable robes of night my days
  Of joy consumed be;
My sorrow sees no light; my lights
  Through sorrow nothing see:
For now my sun his course has run,
  And from his sphere doth go
To endless bed of folded lead,
  And who can blame my woe?

My flocks I now forsake, that so
  My sheep my grief may know;
The lilies loth to take, that since
  His death, presum'd to grow.
I envy air, because it dare
  Still breathe, and he not so;
Hate earth that doth entomb his youth,
  And who can blame my woe?

Not I, poor I alone — (alone
  How can this sorrow be?)
Not only men make moan, but more
  Than men make moan with me:
The gods of greens, the mountain queens,
  The fairy circled row,
The Muses nine, and Powers divine,
  Do all condole my woe.

I have not been able to discover any other poems attributed to this lady, and therefore I conclude that her writings were few. The verses quoted do not look like the production of a practised writer, certainly, for the thoughts are obscure, and the style laboured. The last stanza seems to me particularly unhappy. The expression "gods of greens" is almost laughable; and the idea of the "Muses nine," *et cetera*, condoling her woe, is ludicrously ridiculous. What could Terpsichore, for instance, have to mourn for in the loss of Lord Arundel? And why should "the mountain queens" make moan with his widowed lady? The woe seems very forced and unnatural throughout.

DIANA PRIMROSE,

1630,

WROTE an insufferably prosy tract of twelve pages, called *A Chain of Pearl, or a Memorial of the peerless Graces and heroic Virtues of Queen Elizabeth, of glorious memory, composed by the noble lady, Diana Primrose.* The pearls which form this chain are the *Religion, Chastity, Prudence, Temperance, Clemency, Justice, Fortitude, Science, Patience,* and *Bounty* of her Majesty: all of which are described at length.

I give, as a sample of this fulsome panegyric,

THE EIGHTH PEARL — SCIENCE.

Among the virtues intellectual,
The van is led by that we Science call;
A pearl more precious than the Egyptian queen
Quaff'd off to Antony: of more esteem
Than Indian gold, or most resplendent gems,
Which ravish us with their translucent beams.
How many arts and sciences did deck
This Heroina! who still had at beck
The Muses and the Graces, when that she
Gave audience in state and majesty:
Then did the goddess Eloquence inspire
Her royal breast: Apollo with his lyre
Ne'er made such music; on her sacred lips
Angels enthroned, most heavenly manna sips.

Then might you see her nectar-flowing vein
Surround the heavers; in which sugar'd stream
She able was to drown a world of men,
And drown'd, with sweetness to revive again.
Alasco, the ambassador Polonian,
Who perorated like a mere Slavonian,
And in rude rambling Rhetoric did roll,
She did with Attic eloquence control.
Her speeches to our Academians,
Well shew'd she knew among Athenians
How to deliver such well-tuned words
As with such places punctually accords.
But with what Oratory-ravishments
Did she imparadise her Parliaments!
Her last most princely speech doth verify,
How highly she did England dignify.
Her loyal Commons how did she embrace,
And entertain with a most royal grace!

In justice to Mrs. Primrose, we should call to mind that many contemporary writers of the other sex far surpassed her in their adulations of Royalty. Indeed, she follows some of them at a very humble distance. And I think that flattery is at all times far less chargeable upon the female than upon the male sex. Woman keeps much closer to truth than man does. Whether it be that her natural timidity leads her to keep always in sight of land, or that she has a more honest and consistent regard for verity, it might seem like flattery to determine; but certain it is, that she very rarely sails out boldly into the sea of falsehood, or trusts herself to any considerable distance upon its treacherous waters.

MARY FAGE.

1637.

THIS lady deserves mention, if only for her ingenuity. In a volume published by her in 1637, and entitled *Fame's Roule*, she presents no fewer than four hundred and twenty anagrams and acrostics upon the names of the Royal Family and the nobility! Such instances of patient labour are (happily) rare.

To the Right Hon. JOHN, *Earl of* CLARE, *Lord* HOUGHTON, *of Houghton.*

JOHN HOLLIS.

Anagramma,

Oh! on hy hills.

In virtue when I see you make such speed,
Oh! it doth then no admiration breed,
Hy, on hy hills of honour that you stand:
Nature commandeth virtue such a band.
Honour on virtue ever should attend:
Oh, on hy hills you may forever wend:
Loving of virtue which doth shine so clear,
Likely it is, you Earl of *Clare* appear.
Insue then well, what you have well begun,
So *on hy hills* to stand you well have won.

To the Right Hon. JOHN, *Earl of* WEYMES, *Lord* WEYMES.

JOHN WEYMES.

Anagramma,

Shew men joy.

In your great honour free from all alloy,
O truly noble *Weymes*, you *shew men joy;*
Having your virtues in their clearer sight,
Nothing there is can breed them more delight.
With *joy* your wisdom so doth men content:
Ever we pray it might be permanent:
Your virtuous life doth breed so great delight,
Men wish you endless *joy*, you to requite;
Eternal *joy* may unto you succeed,
Shewing men joy, who do our comfort breed.

It is due to our Female Poets to observe, that as a body they are singularly free from such acrostical and alliterative fancies. Not more than two or three of the Sisterhood have manifested in any degree that cruelty of disposition which consists in subjecting the words they employ to the torture-drill of ingenuity:— and the majority of them disdain any use of language but a simple and sensible one. I cannot call to mind a punster among them.

ANNA HUME,

1644,

WAS the daughter of David Hume, of Godscroft. In 1644 she published, at Edinburgh, *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, Death: translated out of Petrarch;* from which Book the following selection is made.

TO THE READER.

Reader, I have oft been told,
Verse that speak not Love are cold.
I would gladly please thine ear,
But am loth to buy 't too dear.
And 'tis easier far to borrow
Lovers' tears than feel their sorrow.
Therefore he hath furnisht me
Who had enough to serve all three.

FROM THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH.—(CHAP. I.)

Lauretta meeting cruel Death,
Mildly resigns her noble breath.

The fatal hour of her short life drew near,
That doubtful passage which the world doth fear;

Another company, who had not been
Freed from their earthy burden, there were seen,
To try if prayers could appease the wrath,
Or stay the inexorable hand of death.
That beauteous crowd conven'd to see the end
Which all must taste; each neighbour, every friend
Stood by, when grim death with her hand took hold
And pull'd away one only hair of gold.
Thus from the world this fairest flower is ta'en
To make her shine more bright, not out of spleen.
How many moaning plaints, what store of cries
Were utter'd there, when fate shut those fair eyes
For which so oft I sung; whose beauties burn'd
My tortur'd heart so long: whiles others mourn'd
She pleas'd, and quiet did the fruit enjoy
Of her blest life; farewell, without annoy,
True saint on earth, said they: so might she be
Esteem'd, but nothing 'bates death's cruelty.

* * * *

Now at what rate I should the sorrow prize,
I know not; nor have art that can suffice
The sad affliction to relate in verse
Of these fair Dames that wept about her hearse:
Courtesy, Virtue, Beauty, all are lost.
What shall become of us? none else can boast
Such high perfection, no more we shall
Hear her wise words, nor the angelical
Sweet music of her voice; whiles thus they cried,
The parting spirit doth itself divide
With every virtue from the noble breast,
As some grave hermit seeks a lonely rest;

The heavens were clear, and all the ambient air
Without a threatening cloud; no adversaire
Durst once appear, or her calm mind affright:
Death singly did herself conclude the fight;
After, when fear and the extremest plaint
Were ceas'd, the attentive eyes of all were bent
On that fair face, and by despair became
Secure; she who was spent, not like a flame
By force extinguish'd, but as lights decay,—
And undiscernëd waste themselves away:
Thus went the soul in peace, so lamps are spent,
As the oil fails which gives them nourishment:
In sum, her countenance you still might know
The same it was, not pale, but white as snow
Which on the tops of hills in gentle flakes
Falls in a calm, or as a man that takes
Desired rest, as if her lovely sight
Were clos'd with sweetest sleep, after the sprite
Was gone. If this be that fools call to die,
Death seem'd in her exceeding fair to be.

For the foregoing passage I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses*, a work of much research and merit. I take this opportunity to acknowledge very considerable obligations to that production.

ANNE BRADSTREET.

THE only volume bearing the name of this lady is a book published in London in 1650, entitled *The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America: or several Poems compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of Delight. Wherein especially is contained a complete Discourse and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year. Together with an exact Epitome of the Four Monarchies, viz. the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman. With divers other pleasant and serious Poems.*

It appears that our authoress was the wife of the Worshipful Simon Bradstreet, Esquire: but who that personage was, I cannot find out. The title-page of her book says of him that he was "at present residing in the occidental parts of the world, in America, alias Nov-Anglia."

Mrs. Bradstreet must have enjoyed considerable celebrity in her time, although Fame is now so silent respecting her: for Philips, in the *Theatrum Poetarum*, tells us that the memory of her book was not wholly extinct even in his day, and innumerable complimentary odes are prefixed to her work; amongst them the following, by her sister:

If women I with women may compare,
Your works are solid, others light as air;

Some books of women I have heard of late,
Perused some, so witless, intricate,
So void of sense and truth, as if to err
Were only wish'd (acting above their sphere);
And all to get what (silly souls!) they lack,
Esteem to be the wisest of the pack;
Though (for your sake) to some this be permitted,
To print, yet wish I may be better-witted;
Their vanity make this to be inquired
If women are with wit and sense inspired:
Yet when your works shall come to public view,
'Twill be affirm'd, 'twill be confirmed, by you:
And I, when seriously I had revolved
What you had done, I presently resolved,
Theirs was the *Person*'s, not the *Sex*'s failing,
And therefore did bespeak a modest vailing.
What you have done the sun shall witness bear
That for a woman's work, 'tis very rare;
And if the Nine vouchsafe the Tenth a place,
I think they rightly may yield you that grace.

I am sorry that I cannot quite coincide with Mrs. Anne Bradstreet's sister in perceiving a tenth Muse in our poetess. For to me the lady, however illustrious she may have appeared in her own day and generation, seems one of the most common-place of mortals. She has one of the most perfectly vulgar minds that I have ever met with. Let us take the poem entitled *The Four Ages of Man*. Speaking of *Childhood*, she says, in one place, —

What gripes of wind mine infancy did pain?
What tortures I, in breeding teeth, sustain?
What crudities my cold stomach hath bred?

She is not more refined when she speaks of *Youth*:

————My youth is known, alas!
To be as wild as is the snuffing ass;
As vain as froth, as vanity can be,
That who would see vain man, may look on me.

Treating of *Middle Age*, she says:

If happiness my sordidness hath found,
'Tis in the crop of my manurëd ground;
My fatted ox, and my exuberous cow,
My fleeced ewe, and ever-farrowing sow.

The circumstantiality of the "exuberous cow" and the "ever-farrowing sow" is exquisite.

Old Age mourns its feebleness in just similar commonplaces:

My hands and arms, once strong, have lost their might,
I cannot labour, nor I cannot fight:
My comely legs, as nimble as the roe,
Now stiff and numb, can hardly creep or go.

Mrs. Bradstreet has a remarkable eye for similitudes. Her ingenuity in assimilation is quite wonderful. Her organ of comparison must have been prodigious. I select the following instances of its exercise. The force of fancy can surely no farther go: —

AIR is made to represent *Spring*, *Infancy*, *Phlegm*, and *Assyria*:
FIRE is likened to *Summer*, *Youth*, *Blood*, and *Persia*:
EARTH figures forth *Autumn*, *Mid-Age*, *Choler*, and *Greece*:
And WATER suggests *Winter*, *Old Age*, *Melancholy*, and *Rome*.

These uncommonly lively abstractions are frequent with her.

Mrs. Bradstreet's *History of the Four Monarchies of the World* is a very original production, and quite a lesson to historians. Its chief peculiarity is that, instead of *recording* incidents, it *suggests* them. This is the way in which she indites the history of Darius Ochus:

Great Artaxerxes dead, Ochus succeeds,
Of whom no record 's extant of his deeds;
Was it because the Grecians now at war,
Made writers work at home, they sought not far?
Or dealing with the Persian, now no more,
Their acts recorded not, as heretofore?
Or else, *perhaps, the deeds of Persian kings*
In after wars was burnt, 'mongst other things?
That three and twenty years he reign'd, I find —
The rest is but conjecture of my mind.

There is often a demure homeliness, a familiarity, in Mrs. Bradstreet's style, which is perfectly irresistible. In her *Elegy on Sir Philip Sidney*, after several stanzas of excessive adulation, she thus writes: —

To say the truth, thy worth I shall but stain,
Thy fame and praise is sure beyond my strain:

Yet great Augustus was content (we know)
To be saluted by a silly crow:
Then let such crows as I thy praises sing,
A crow 's a crow, and Cæsar is a king.

Apostrophising Zutphen, where Sidney was slain, she says: —

O Zutphen, Zutphen! that most fatal city,
Made famous by thy fall, much more's the pity;
Ah, in his blooming time death pluck'd this rose,
Ere he was ripe:—his thread cut Atropos.

So Sidney's fame I leave to England's rolls,
— His bones do lie interr'd in stately Paul's.

I quote lastly Mrs. Bradstreet's

EPITAPH FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Here sleeps the Queen: this is the royal bed,
O' the' damask rose, sprung from the white and red,
Whose sweet perfume fills the all-filling air,
This rose is wither'd, once so lovely fair;
On neither tree did grow such rose before,
The greater was our gain, our loss the more.

ANN COLLINS,

1653,

WROTE a book called *Divine Songs and Meditations*, from which I extract the following

SONG.

The Winter being over,
In order comes the Spring,
Which doth green herbs discover,
And cause the birds to sing.
The night also expired,
Then comes the morning bright,
Which is so much desired
By all that love the light.
This may learn
Them that mourn,
To put their grief to flight:
The Spring succeedeth Winter,
And day must follow night.

He therefore that sustaineth
Affliction or distress,
Which every member paineth
And findeth no release:
Let such therefore despair not,
But on firm hope depend,
Whose griefs immortal are not
And therefore must have end.

They that faint
With complaint
Therefore are to blame:
They add to their afflictions,
And amplify the same.

For if they could with patience
Awhile possess the mind,
By inward consolations
They might refreshing find,
To sweeten all their crosses,
That little time they 'dure:
So might they gain by losses,
And sharp would sweet procure.
But if the mind
Be inclined
To unquietness,
That only may be called
The worst of all distress.

He that is melancholy,
Detesting all delight,
His wits by sottish folly
Are ruinated quite.
Sad discontent and murmurs
To him are incident:
Were he possessed of honours,
He could not be content.
Sparks of joy
Fly away,
Floods of care arise;

And all delightful motions
In the conception dies.

But those that are contented,
However things do fall,
Much anguish is prevented,
And they soon freed from all.
They finish all their labours
With much felicity,
Their joy in trouble savours
Of perfect piety.
Cheerfulness
Doth express
A settled pious mind ;
Which is not prone to grudging,
From murmuring refin'd.

The calm, pious cheerfulness of sentiment displayed in the above lines will not fail to yield a warm sensation of pleasure to the reader. I make especial reference to it, because I think it characteristic of the female spirit generally, as this volume will prove almost in every page; and because I think that a critic is bound to take every possible opportunity to pay honour to those writers who address the better feelings of humanity.

MARY MORPETH,

1656,

"A SCOTCH poetess, and a friend of the poet Drummond, of whom, besides many other things in poetry, she hath a large *Encomium* in verse." — *Theatrum Poetarum.*

TO WILLIAM DRUMMOND, OF HAWTHORNDEN.

(Prefixed to his Poems, 1656.)

I never rested on the Muses' bed,
Nor dipt my quill in the Thessalian fountain,
My rustic muse was rudely fosterëd,
And flies too low to reach the double mountain.

Then do not sparks with your bright suns compare,
Perfection in a woman's work is rare;
From an untroubled mind should verses flow;
My discontent makes mine too muddy show;
And hoarse encumbrances of household care,
Where these remain, the Muses ne'er repair.

If thou dost extol her hair,
Or her ivory forehead fair,
Or those stars whose bright reflection
Thralls thy heart in sweet subjection:
Or when to display thou seeks
The snow-mixt roses on her cheeks,

Or those rubies soft and sweet
Over those pretty rows that meet:
The Chian painter as asham'd
Hides his picture so far fam'd;
And the queen he carv'd it by
With a blush her face doth dye,
Since those lines do limn a creature,
That so far surpass'd her feature.
When thou show'st how fairest Flora
Prankt with pride the banks of Ora,
So thy verse her streams doth honour,
Strangers grow enamour'd on her;
All the swans that swim in Po
Would their native brooks forego,
And, as loathing Phœbus' beams,
Long to bathe in cooler streams.
Tree-turned Daphne would be seen
In her groves to flourish green;
And her boughs would gladly spare
To frame a garland for thy hair,
That fairest nymphs, with finest fingers,
May thee crown the best of singers.
But when thy Muse, dissolv'd in showers,
Wails that peerless prince of ours,
Cropt by too untimely fate,
Her mourning doth exasperate
Senseless things to see thee mourn,
Stones do weep, and trees do groan,
Birds in air, fishes in flood,
Beasts in field forsake their food;
The Nymphs foregoing all their bowers
Tear the chaplets deckt with flowers;

Sol himself with misty vapour
Hides from earth his glorious taper,
And, as moved to hear thee 'plain,
Shows his grief in showers of rain.

MARY MORPETH, *of Oxlie.*

Mary Morpeth was the author of several Poetical Epistles, with titles like the following: — *To the most Illustrious John, Earl of Lauderdale; a congratulatory welcome of an heart-well-wishing quill:* but I find nothing in those poems that is worth extracting. Should the reader be disposed, however, from the style of the passage above quoted, to entertain a higher opinion of our fair author's merits than I do, I may refer him to a volume of Scottish Fugitive Poetry, which was published at Edinburgh in 1823, and which contains several of the letters in verse to which I have alluded. They will be found under the signature of "M. M."

KATHERINE PHILIPS,

1631—1664,

Was the daughter of John Fowles, of Bucklersbury, a London merchant, and was born in 1631. She was married in 1647 to Mr. James Philips, of the Priory, Cardigan, and died of small-pox in 1664.

Mrs. Philips has always seemed to me to be one of the best of our Female Poets. Her versification, though often careless, is chaste and harmonious, and her sentiments extremely pure and excellent. She appears to have enjoyed considerable fame, for Cowley and Dryden celebrated her genius, and Jeremy Taylor dedicated to her his *Discourse on Friendship.*

That must have been a noble spirit which in such a licentious and gaudy era as the reign of Charles the Second could conceive and embody the following

ODE AGAINST PLEASURE.

There's no such thing as pleasure here,
'Tis all a perfect cheat,
Which does but shine and disappear,
Whose charm is but deceit:
The empty bribe of yielding souls,
Which first betrays, and then controls.

'Tis true, it looks at distance fair,
But if we do approach,

The fruit of Sodom will impair;
And perish at a touch;
It being than in fancy less,
And we expect more than possess.

For by our pleasures we are cloy'd,
And so desire is done;
Or else, like rivers, they make wide
The channels where they run;
And either way true bliss destroys,
Making us narrow, or our joys.

We covet pleasure easily,
But ne'er true bliss possess;
For many things must make it be,
But one may make it less.
Nay, were our state as we would choose it,
'Twould be consum'd by fear to lose it.

What art thou, then, thou wingëd air,
More weak and swift than fame?
Whose next successor is despair,
And its attendant shame.
The' experienced prince then reason had
Who said of Pleasure, — "It is mad."

It is from passages like this that we gain a true idea of the power and mission of the female mind. To refine, to exalt, and to purify the soul of the world, is woman's noble office: to keep chaste its sentiments, to spiritualise its affections, and to detach it from the too-

material pleasures and engagements of life, is her lofty duty: and the poem above quoted is one proof among many in this work, how earnestly and ably, even under the most discouraging circumstances, she applies herself to her allotted task. Great indeed is the debt that morality owes to her!

The pure and chaste sentiments which Katherine Philips urged may further be seen in this fine poem, called

A COUNTRY LIFE.

How sacred and how innocent
A country life appears;
How free from tumult, discontent,
From flattery or fears!

This was the first and happiest life,
When man enjoy'd himself;
Till pride exchangëd peace for strife,
And happiness for pelf.

'Twas here the poets were inspired,
Here taught the multitude;
The brave they here with honour fir'd,
And civilised the rude.

That golden age did entertain
No passion but of love:
The thoughts of ruling and of gain
Did ne'er their fancies move.

None then did envy neighbour's wealth,
Nor plot to wrong his bed;
Happy in friendship and in health,
On roots, not beasts, they fed.

They knew no law nor physic then,
Nature was all their wit:
And if there yet remain to men
Content, sure this is it.

What blessings doth this world afford
To tempt or bribe desire!
Her courtship is all fire and sword,
Who would not then retire?

Then welcome dearest solitude,
My great felicity;
Though some are pleas'd to call thee rude,
Thou art not so, but we.

Them that do covet only rest,
A cottage will suffice:
It is not brave to be possest
Of earth, but to despise.

Opinion is the rate of things,
From hence our peace doth flow;
I have a better fate than kings,
Because I think it so.

When all the stormy world doth roar,
How unconcern'd am I!

I cannot fear to tumble lower
Who never could be high.

Secure in these unenvy'd walls,
I think not on the state,
And pity no man's case that falls
From his ambitious height.

Silence and innocence are safe;
A heart that's nobly true
At all these little arts can laugh
That do the world subdue.

While others revel it in state,
Here I'll contented sit,
And think I have as good a fate
As wealth and pomp admit.

Let some in courtship take delight,
And to the' Exchange resort;
Then revel out a winter's night,
Not making love, but sport.

These never knew a noble flame,
'Tis lust, scorn or design:
While vanity plays all their game,
Let peace and honour mine.

When the inviting spring appears,
To Hyde Park let them go,
And hasting thence be full of fears
To lose Spring-Garden show.

Let others (nobler) seek to gain
In knowledge happy fate,
And others busy them in vain
To study ways of state.

But I resolvëd from within,
Confirmëd from without,
In privacy intend to spin
My future minutes out.

And from this hermitage of mine,
I banish all wild toys,
And nothing that is not divine
Shall dare to tempt my joys.

There are below but two things good,
Friendship and Honesty;
And only those of all I would
Ask for felicity.

In this retir'd and humble seat,
Free from both war and strife,
I am not forc'd to make retreat,
But choose to spend my life.

The subjoined lines seem to me to contain some sound philosophy, most pointedly expressed.

TO MY ANTENOR, MARCH 16, 1660–1.

My dear Antenor, now give o'er,
For my sake talk of graves no more;

Death is not in our power to gain,
And is both wish'd and fear'd in vain.
Let's be as angry as we will,
Grief sooner may distract than kill;
And the unhappy often prove
Death is as coy a thing as love.
Those whose own sword their death did give,
Afraid were, or asham'd, to live;
And by an act so desperate,
Did poorly run away from fate;
'Tis braver much t'outride the storm,
Endure its rage, and shun its harm;
Affliction nobly undergone,
More greatness shows than having none.
But yet the wheel in turning round,
At last may lift us from the ground;
And when our fortune's most severe,
The less we have, the less we fear.
And why should we that grief permit,
Which cannot mend nor shorten it?
Let's wait for a succeeding good,
Woes have their ebb as well as flood;
And since the parliament have rescued you,
Believe that Providence will do so too.

Mrs. Philips was known, as a poetess, by the name of Orinda; and was as exemplary in the discharge of her domestic duties as she was celebrated for her poetical abilities.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

1597—1662.

THIS lady was the amiable daughter of King James the First; and she became the Queen of Bohemia. The following verses were given by her to Lord Harrington of Exton, her preceptor; they are, as will be seen, full of devout feeling, very gracefully and eloquently expressed.

This is joy, this is true pleasure,
If we best things make our treasure,
And enjoy them at full leisure,
Evermore in richest measure.

God is only excellent,
Let up to Him our love be sent;
Whose desires are set or bent
On aught else, shall much repent.

Theirs is a most wretched case,
Who themselves so far disgrace,
That they their affections place
Upon things nam'd vile and base.

Let us love of heaven receive,
These are joys our hearts will heave
Higher than we can conceive,
And shall us not fail nor leave.

Earthly things do fade, decay,
Constant to us not one day:
Suddenly they pass away,
And we can not make them stay.

All the vast world doth contain,
To content man's heart, are vain,
That still justly will complain,
And unsatisfied remain.

God most holy, high and great,
Our delight doth make complete:
When in us he takes his seat,
Only then we are replete.

Why should vain joys us transport?
Earthly pleasures are but short,
And are mingled in such sort,
Griefs are greater than the sport.

And regard of this yet have,
Nothing can from death us save,
Then we must into our grave,
When we most are pleasure's slave.

By long use our souls will cleave
To the earth; then it we leave;
Then will cruel death bereave,
All the joys that we receive.

Thence they go to hellish flame,
Ever tortur'd in the same,

With perpetual blot of name,
Flout, reproach, and endless shame;

Torment not to be exprest,
But O then! how greatly blest,
Whose desires are whole addrest
To the heavenly things and best.

Thy affections shall increase,
Growing forward without cease,
Even until thou diest in peace,
And enjoyest eternal ease.

When thy heart is fullest fraught
With heaven's love, it shall be caught
To the place it lov'd and sought,
Which Christ's precious blood hath bought.

Joys of those which there shall dwell,
No heart can think, no tongue can tell;
Wonderfully they excel,
Those thy soul will fully swell.

Are these things indeed even so?
Do I certainly them know,
And am I so much my foe,
To remain yet dull and slow?

Doth not that surpassing joy,
Ever freed from all annoy,
Me inflame? and quite destroy
Love of every earthly toy?

Oh, how frozen is my heart!
Oh, my soul! how dead thou art!
Thou, O God! we may impart,
Vain is human strength and art.

O my God! for Christ his sake,
Quite from me this dulness take;
Cause me earth's love to forsake,
And of heaven my realm to make.

If early thanks I render thee,
That thou hast enlightened me
With such knowledge that I see
What things must behoveful be:

That I hereon meditate,
That desire, I find (though late)
To prize heaven at higher rate,
And these pleasures vain to hate.

O, enlighten more my sight,
And dispel my darksome night,
Good Lord, by thy heavenly light,
And thy beams most pure and bright.

Since in me such thoughts are scant,
Of thy grace repair my want,
Often meditations grant,
And in me more deeply plant.

Work of wisdom more desire,
Grant I may with holy ire

Slight the world, and me inspire
With thy love to be on fire.

What care I for lofty place,
If the Lord grant me his grace,
Shewing me his pleasant face,
And with joy I end my race.

This is only my desire,
This doth set my heart on fire,
That I might receive my hire,
With the saints' and angels' quire.

O my soul of heavenly birth,
Do thou scorn this basest earth,
Place not here thy joy and mirth,
Where of bliss is greatest dearth.

From below thy mind remove,
And affect the things above:
Set thy heart and fix thy love
Where thou truest joys shalt prove.

If I do love things on high,
Doubtless them enjoy shall I,
Earthly pleasures if I try
They pursuëd faster fly.

O Lord! glorious, yet most kind,
Thou hast these thoughts put in my mind;
Let me grace increasing find,
Me to thee more firmly bind.

To God glory, thanks and praise,
I will render all my days,
Who hath blest me many ways,
Shedding on me gracious rays.

To me grace, O Father! send,
On thee wholly to depend,
That all may to thy glory tend;
So let me live, so let me end.

Now to the true Eternal King,
Not seen with human eye,
The' immortal, only wise, true God,
Be praise perpetually!

The foregoing extract is taken from the *Nugæ Antiquæ*. I am not aware that the Princess wrote any other poems; but that her powers and acquirements were well appreciated, there is plenty of evidence to show. Like many of the noble ladies of her time, the Princess Elizabeth was well taught in classical and polite learning. It will be observed that most of the Female Poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were highly-educated women of rank: and the ease and grace with which they bore their scholastic attainments will not fail to be remarked by the reader.

FRANCES BOOTHBY,

1670,

LIVED in the reign of Charles the Second, and was related to Lady Yate, of Harvington in Worcestershire, as we learn from the dedication of the only piece she has written, a play called *Marcelia.*

SONG.

You powerful Gods! if I must be
An injur'd offering to Love's deity,
Grant my revenge, this plague on men,
That women ne'er may love again.
Then I'll with joy submit unto my fate,
Which by your justice gives their empire date.

Depose that proud insulting boy,
Who most is pleas'd when he can most destroy;
O let the world no longer govern'd be
By such a blind and childish Deity!
For if you gods be in your power severe,
We shall adore you, not from love, but fear.

But if you'll his divinity maintain,
O'er men, false men, confine his torturing reign;
And when their hearts love's greatest torments prove,
Let that not pity, but our laughter move.
Thus scorn'd and lost to all their wishes aim,
Let Rage, Despair, and Death, then end their flame.

MARGARET, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

1673.

THIS very voluminous and indefatigable authoress was born at St. John's, near Colchester, about the end of the reign of James the First: her father was Sir Charles Lucas. She became one of the Maids of Honour to Queen Henrietta Maria, whom she accompanied to France. She there was married to the Marquis of Newcastle, who assisted her in her literary labours. The noble pair produced between them nearly twelve folio volumes of plays, poems, orations, and essays; most of them sufficiently ambitious in their aim, but none of them at all remarkable for wit or genius.

The Duchess is not without force, and that, too, often of a picturesque and effective sort, as the following extracts will show: but the bulk of her works are insufferably tame, common-place, and prosy.

OF THE THEME OF LOVE.

O Love, how thou art tired out with rhyme!
Thou art a tree whereon all poets climb;
And from thy branches every one takes some
Of thy sweet fruit, which Fancy feeds upon.
But now thy tree is left so bare and poor,
That they can hardly gather one plum more.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ELFIN QUEEN.

She on a dewy leaf doth bathe,
And as she sits, the leaf doth wave;
There, like a new fall'n flake of snow,
Doth her white limbs in beauty show.
Her garments fair her maids put on,
Made of the pure light from the sun.

PERSONIFICATION OF MELANCHOLY.

Her voice is low, and gives a hollow sound;
She hates the light, and is in darkness found;
Or sits with blinking lamps, or tapers small,
Which various shadows make against the wall.
She loves nought else but noise which discord makes,
As croaking frogs, whose dwelling is in lakes;
The raven's hoarse, the mandrake's hollow groan,
And shrieking owls, which fly i' the night alone:
The tolling bell which for the dead rings out;
A mill where rushing waters run about;
The roaring winds, which shake the cedars tall,
Plough up the seas, and beat the rocks withal.
She loves to walk in the still moonshine night,
And in a thick dark grove she takes delight;
In hollow caves, thatch'd houses, and low cells,
She loves to live, and there alone she dwells.

The account which Melancholy gives of herself scarcely agrees with the foregoing portrait of her by her rival, Mirth.

MELANCHOLY'S DESCRIPTION OF HER DWELLING.

I dwell in groves that gilt are with the sun;
Sit on the banks by which clear waters run;
In summers hot down in a shade I lie;
My music is the buzzing of a fly;
I walk in meadows, where grows fresh green grass;
In fields where corn is high, I often pass;
Walk up the hills, where round I prospects see,
Some brushy woods, and some all champaigns be;
Returning back, I in fresh pastures go,
To hear how sheep do bleat, and cows do low;
In winter cold, when nipping frosts come on,
Then I do live in a small house alone;
Although 'tis plain, yet cleanly 'tis within,
Like to a soul that's pure and clear from sin;
And there I dwell in quiet and still peace,
Not fill'd with cares how riches to increase;
I wish nor seek for vain and fruitless pleasures;
No riches are, but what the mind intreasures.
Thus am I solitary, live alone,
Yet better lov'd, the more that I am known;
And though my face ill-favour'd at first sight,
After acquaintance, it will give delight.
Refuse me not, for I shall constant be;
Maintain your credit and your dignity.

THE FUNERAL OF CALAMITY.

Calamity was laid on Sorrow's hearse,
And coverings had of melancholy verse;
Compassion, a kind friend, did mourning go,
And tears about the corpse, as flowers, strow;
A garland of deep sighs by Pity made
Upon Calamity's sad corpse was laid;
Bells of complaint did ring it to the grave,
Poets a monument of fame it gave.

QUEEN MAB'S DINNER-TABLE.

Upon a mushroom there is spread
A cover fine, of spider's web;
And for her stool a thistle-down,
And for her cup an acorn's crown,
Wherein strong nectar there is fill'd
That from sweet flowers is distill'd.
Flies of all sorts, both fat and good,
Partridge, snipes, quails and poult, her food,
Pheasants, larks, cocks, or any kind,
Both wild and tame, you there might find.
But for her guard serves grosser meat,
On stall-fed dormouse they do eat.

ANNE KILLEGREW,

1685,

Was the daughter of Dr. Henry Killegrew, Master of the Savoy, and one of the Prebendaries of Westminster. She was born shortly before the restoration of Charles the Second, and died in 1685. She appears to have been highly accomplished, and to have gained a high reputation amongst her contemporaries. Dryden says of her, —

"Art she had none, yet wanted none;
For nature did that want supply,
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seem'd borrow'd where 'twas only born."

The following poem is a pleasing specimen of her verse: —

THE COMPLAINT OF A LOVER.

See'st thou yonder craggy rock,
Whose head o'erlooks the swelling main,
Where never shepherd fed his flock,
Or careful peasant sow'd his grain?

No wholesome herb grows on the same,
Or bird of day will on it rest;
'Tis barren as the hopeless flame,
That scorches my tormented breast.

Deep underneath a cave does lie,
The entrance hid with dismal yew,
Where Phœbus never show'd his eye,
Or cheerful day yet pierced through.

In that dark melancholy cell,
(Retreat and solace to my woe,)
Love, sad despair, and I, do dwell,
The springs from whence my griefs do flow.

Treacherous love that did appear,
(When he at first approach'd my heart,)
Drest in a garb far from severe,
Or threatening aught of future smart.

So innocent those charms then seem'd,
When Rosalinda first I spy'd,
Ah! who would them have deadly deem'd?
But flowers do often serpents hide.

Beneath those sweets concealed lay,
To love the cruel foe, Disdain,
With which, alas! she does repay
My constant and deserving pain.

When I in tears have spent the night,
With sighs I usher in the sun,
Who never saw a sadder sight
In all the courses he has run.

Sleep, which to others ease does prove,
Comes unto me, alas! in vain;
For in my dreams I am in love,
And in them, too, she does disdain.

Sometimes t' amuse my sorrow, I
Unto the hollow rocks repair,
And loudly to the echo cry,
Ah! gentle nymph, come ease my care.

Thou, who times past a lover wert,
Ah, pity me, who now am so;
And by a sense of thine own smart
Alleviate my mighty woe.

Come flatter, then, or chide my grief;
Catch my last words and call me fool;
Or say she loves for my relief,
My passion either soothe, or school.

The following is her

EPITAPH, WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

When I am dead, few friends attend my hearse,
And for a monument, I leave — my verse.

HERODIA'S DAUGHTER.

Presenting St. John's head in a charger.

Behold, dear mother, who was late our fear,
Disarm'd and harmless, I present you here;
The tongue tied up that made all Jewry quake,
And which so often did our greatness shake:
No terror sits upon his awful brow,
Where fierceness reign'd, there calmness triumphs now.
As lovers use he gazes on my face,
With eyes that languish as they sued for grace;
Wholly subdued by my victorious charms,
See how his head reposes in my arms.
Come join then with me in my just transport,
Who thus have brought the hermit to the court.

It seems that our author was accused of plagiarism by her contemporaries; or that at least, in Dryden's phrase, her vigour "seemed borrowed." The following is her notice of the charge: —

The envious age, only to me alone,
Will not allow what I do write my own;
But let them rage, and 'gainst a maid conspire,
So deathless numbers from my tuneful lyre
Do ever flow; so Phœbus, I by thee
Inspired divinely, and possest may be;
I willingly accept Cassandra's fate,
To speak the truth, although believed too late.

ANNE, MARCHIONESS OF WHARTON,

1685,

Was the daughter of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, in Oxfordshire, and first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq., afterwards Marquis of Wharton. She wrote Paraphrases on *The Lamentations of Jeremiah* and on *The Lord's Prayer; Verses to Mr. Waller,* an *Elegy on Lord Rochester,* the Poems quoted below, and some other effusions, but not many. She was highly esteemed in her own day, and was complimented by Waller and Dryden. She died in 1685.

The following poem appears in Dryden's *Miscellany:*

VERSES

On the Snuff of a Candle: made in Sickness.

See there the taper's dim and doleful light,
  In gloomy waves rolls silently about,
And represents to my dim weary sight,
  My light of life almost as near burnt out.

Ah, health! best part and substance of our joy,
  (For without thee 'tis nothing but a shade,)
Why dost thou partially thyself employ,
  Whilst thy proud foes as partially invade?

What we, who ne'er enjoy, so fondly seek,
  Those who possess thee still, almost despise;
To gain immortal glory, raise the weak,
  Taught by their former want thy worth to prize.

Dear, melancholy Muse! my constant guide,
  Charm this coy health back to my fainting heart,
Or I'll accuse thee of vainglorious pride,
  And swear thou dost but feign the moving art.

But why do I upbraid thee, gentle Muse,
  Who for all sorrows mak'st me some amends?
Alas! our sickly minds sometimes abuse
  Our best physicians and our dearest friends.

SONG.

How hardly I conceal'd my tears?
  How oft did I complain?
When, many tedious days, my fears
  Told me I lov'd in vain.

But now my joys as wild are grown,
  And hard to be conceal'd;
Sorrow may make a silent moan,
  But joy will be reveal'd.

I tell it to the bleating flocks,
To every stream and tree,
And bless the hollow murm'ring rocks
For echoing back to me.

Thus you may see with how much joy
We want, we wish, believe;
'Tis hard such passion to destroy,
But easy to deceive.

The Marchioness of Wharton's paraphrase of the 53d chapter of Isaiah suggested Waller's *Cantos of Divine Poesy*, and led that writer to address to her several highly complimentary verses. Lady Wharton's poems are distinguished by a fine sweetness of sentiment, and her thoughts are always very gracefully and delicately expressed. Her productions are widely scattered, and are to be found in different miscellaneous collections of contemporary verse.

MRS. TAYLOR.

1685.

In a *Miscellany, being a Collection of Poems by several Hands*, published by Aphara Behn, in 1685, are the three following Pieces, "made by Mrs. Taylor," of whom there is no account.

SONG.

Ye virgin powers, defend my heart
From amorous looks and smiles,
From saucy Love, or nicer Art,
Which most our sex beguiles:

From sighs and vows, from awful fears
That do to Pity move,
From speaking silence, and from tears,
Those springs that water Love.

But if through Passion I grow blind,
Let Honour be my guide,
And where frail nature seems inclin'd,
There fix a guard of Pride.

A heart whose flames are seen though pure,
Needs every virtue's aid,
And those who think themselves secure,
The soonest are betray'd.

TO MERTILL,

Who desired her to speak to Clorinda of his love.

Mertill, though my heart should break
In granting thy desire,
To cold Clorinda I will speak,
And warm her with my fire.

To save thee from approaching harm,
My death I will obey;
To save thee sinking in the storm,
I'll cast myself away.

May her charms equal those of thine,
No words can e'er express,
And let her love be great as mine;
Which thee would only bless!

May you still prove her faithful slave,
And she so kind and true;
She nothing may desire to have,
Or fear to lose—but you.

SONG.

Strephon has fashion, wit, and youth,
With all things else that please;
He nothing wants but love and truth,
To ruin me with ease.

But he is flint, and bears the art
To kindle stray desire;
His power inflames another's heart,
Yet he ne'er feels the fire.

Alas! it does my soul perplex,
When I his charms recall,
To think he should despise the sex,
Or what's worse, love them all.

My wearied heart, like Noah's dove,
In vain may seek for rest,
Finding no hope to fix my love,
Returns into my breast.

The smoothness, grace, and lively fancy displayed in the three poems which I have above quoted lead us to imagine that Mrs. Taylor was a practised writer: but I can find no further trace of her than that which is here presented. There is something in the nice rounding off of the sentences, and in the soft, semi-voluptuous sentiment, which makes me almost suspect that "Mrs. Taylor" was no other than Mrs. Aphara Behn herself. To say the least of it, she was evidently brought up in the same school of taste as that which produced the clever but meretricious writer just named.

APHARA BEHN,

1645—1689,

Is one of the most prominent, but one of the least estimable, of the British Female Poets. She has been called "a Female Wycherley," and there could not well be a more characteristic description of her. To a fine and subtle humour she joins great grossness of thought; and to a lively and laughing imagination she unites an essential coarseness of passion which disfigures and depraves nearly all she writes. Allowances are of course to be made for the wicked era in which she flourished (the reign of the second Charles); but still it must be confessed that the licentiousness complained of is not (as in some other writers of the same period) a mere adjunct, which can be lopped off, but an integral part of the composition, which cannot be removed from the rest.

Aphara Johnson was born in 1645, of a good family, her father being Lieutenant-Governor of Surinam. At her father's death the family returned to London, where she married a Dutch merchant, named Behn. She became a favourite at court, and displayed so much ability, that Charles the Second entrusted her with several political affairs of importance, in which she did the state some service. She was even sent out to the Netherlands on a secret mission, and was enabled to give some valuable information to the Government.

On finding, however, that her services were not sufficiently recognised, she quitted the stormy arena of politics, and devoted herself entirely to literary pursuits.

Her chief works are *Oronooko*, a novel, on which Southern's tragedy of the same name is founded; a volume of Miscellaneous Poems, and a number of Plays, which are amongst the grossest productions ever given to the world. Mrs. Behn died in 1689.

This lady's muse has been likened to Moore's, and not, I think, without some reason. She exhibits the same liveliness and pointedness of fancy, and writes with an aptness and happy expressiveness which might easily be mistaken for the similar characteristics of Ireland's bard. The following lyric has quite the expression of Moore, although it is deficient in the *point* which always distinguishes that writer.

Love in fantastic triumph sat,
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd;
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he show'd.
From thy bright eyes he took his fires
Which round about in sport he hurl'd;
But 'twas from mine he took desires
Enough t' undo the amorous world.

From me he took his sighs and tears,
From thee his pride and cruelty;
From me his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from thee;

Thus thou and I the god have arm'd,
And set him up a deity;
But my poor heart alone is harm'd;
Whilst thine the victor is, and free.

I quote, next, a poem, entitled,

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HYMEN AND CUPID — MARRIAGE AND LOVE.

In vain does Hymen with religious vows
Oblige his slaves to wear his chains with ease,
A privilege alone that *Love* allows: —
'Tis Love alone can make our fetters please.

The angry tyrant lays his yoke on all,
Yet in his fiercest rage is charming still;
Officious Hymen comes whene'er we call,
But haughty Love comes only when he will.

For fluency and harmony of style, Mrs. Behn has scarcely a superior in our language. I do not know a poem that flows more smoothly and musically than the following: —

THE RETURN.

Amyntas! whilst you
Have an art to subdue,
And can conquer a heart with a look or a smile;
You pitiless grow,
And no faith will allow;
'Tis the glory you seek when you rifle the spoil.

Your soft warring eyes,
When prepared for the prize,
Can laugh at the aids of my feeble disdain:
You can humble the foe,
And soon make her to know,
Though she arms her with pride, that her efforts are vain.

But, shepherd! beware,
Though a victor you are;
A tyrant was never secure on his throne;
Whilst proudly you aim,
New conquests to gain,
Some hard-hearted nymph may return you your own!

IN IMITATION OF HORACE.

What mean those amorous curls of jet?
For what heart-ravish'd maid
Dost thou thy hair in order set,
Thy wanton tresses braid?
And thy vast store of beauties open lay,
That the deluded fancy leads astray?

For pity hide thy starry eyes,
Whose languishments destroy;
And look not on the slave that dies
With an excess of joy.
Defend thy coral lips, thy amber breath;
To taste these sweets, alas! is certain death.

LADY MARY CHUDLEIGH,

1656—1710,

WAS the author of a book entitled *Poems on several Occasions*, and published in London in the year 1703. She was the daughter of Richard Lee, Esquire, of Winsloder, in Devonshire, and wife of Sir George Chudleigh, Baronet, of Ashton, in the same county. She was born in 1656, and died in 1710. Besides her poems, she was the author of a volume of Essays, which was published in 1710.

THE RESOLVE.

For what the world admires I'll wish no more,
Nor court that airy nothing of a Name;
Such fleeting shadows let the proud adore,
Let them be suppliants for an empty fame.

If Reason rules within and keeps the throne,
While the inferior faculties obey,
And all her laws without reluctance own,
Accounting none more fit, more just than they;

If Virtue my free soul unsullied keeps,
Exempting it from passion and from stain;
If no black guilty thoughts disturb my sleeps,
And no past crimes my vext remembrance pain:—

If though I pleasure find in living here,
I yet can look on death without surprise;
If I've a soul above the reach of fear,
And which will nothing mean or sordid prize:

A soul which cannot be depress'd by grief,
Nor too much rais'd by the sublimest joy;
Which can, when troubled, give itself relief,
And to advantage all its thoughts employ; —

Then am I happy in my humble state,
Although not crown'd with glory nor with bays;
A mind that triumphs over vice and fate
Esteems it mean to court the world for *praise.*

Lady Chudleigh distinguished herself by her clever championship of her sex at a time when the female mind was far too little esteemed. There is a noble assertion and defence of Woman's mental powers in her Poem entitled *The Ladies' Defence; or the Bride-woman's Counsellor answered. A Poem in a Dialogue between Sir John Brute, Sir William Loveall, Melissa, and a Parson.* The poor parson is admirably put down. I regret that I cannot find an extractable passage which will give a good idea of the genius and good sense displayed in this production.

I think, however, that Lady Chudleigh could *defend* her sex much more wisely than she could *advise* them. Let the following lines bear witness: —

TO THE LADIES.

Wife and servant are the same,
But only differ in the name:
For when that fatal knot is tied,
Which nothing, nothing, can divide,
When she the word *obey* has said,
And man by law supreme has made,
Then all that's kind is laid aside,
And nothing left but state and pride:
Fierce as an Eastern prince he grows,
And all his innate rigour shows:
Then but to look, to laugh, or speak,
Will the nuptial contract break.
Like mutes, she signs alone must make,
And never any freedom take;
But still be govern'd by a nod,
And fear her husband as her god;
Him still must serve, him still obey,
And nothing act and nothing say,
But what her haughty lord thinks fit,
Who with the power has all the wit.
Then shun, oh! shun that wretched state,
And all the fawning flatterers hate:
Value yourselves, and men despise:
You must be proud, if you'll be wise.

THE HONOURABLE MARY MONK,

1715,

Was the daughter of Lord Molesworth, of Ireland, and the wife of George Monk, Esq. In 1715 was published, after her death, a volume entitled *Marinda: Poems and Translations.* In the Dedication to the Princess of Wales, written by her father, we are told "Most of them are the product of the leisure hours of a young gentlewoman, lately deceased; who, in a remote country retirement, without omitting the daily care due to a large family, not only perfectly acquired several languages, but the good morals and principles contained in those books, so as to put them in practice, as well during her life and languishing sickness as the hour of death: in short, she died not only like a Christian, but like a Roman lady; and so became at once the object of the grief and comfort of her relations."

The following are extracted from the book referred to:—

I. FROM THE EPISTLE TO MARINDA.

A just applause and an immortal name
Is the true object of the Poet's aim;
In quest of this they boldly quit the shore,
And dangerous seas and unknown lands explore.

In the whole plan their interest has no share,
The goods of fortune are beneath their care:
They on the smoke of public incense live,
Look down on wealth, and think it mean to thrive.

II. ON PROVIDENCE.

As a kind mother with indulgent eye
Views her fair charge, and melts with sympathy,
And one's dear face imprints with kisses sweet,
One to her bosom clasps, one on her knee
Softly sustains in pleasing dignity,
And one permits to cling about her feet;
And reads their various wants, and each request
In look or action or in sigh express'd:
This little supplicant in gracious style
She answers; that she blesses with a smile;
Or if she blames their suit, or if approves,
And whether pleas'd or griev'd, yet still she loves:
With like regard high Providence divine
Watches affectionate o'er human race,
One feeds, one comforts, does to all incline,
And each assists with kind parental care;
Or, once denying us some needful grace,
Only denies to move an ardent prayer;
Or, courted for imaginary wants,
Seems to deny, but in denying grants.

III. VERSES

Written on her Deathbed, at Bath, to her Husband in London.

Thou who dost all my worldly thoughts employ,
Thou pleasing source of all my earthly joy,
Thou tenderest husband and thou dearest friend,
To thee this first, this last adieu I send!
At length the conqueror Death asserts his right,
And will for ever veil me from thy sight;
He woos me to him with a cheerful grace,
And not one terror clouds his meagre face;
He promises a lasting rest from pain,
And shews that all life's fleeting joys are vain;
The' eternal scenes of heaven he sets in view,
And tells me that no other joys are true.
But love, fond love, would yet resist his power,
Would fain awhile defer the parting hour:
He brings thy mourning image to my eyes,
And would obstruct my journey to the skies.
But say, thou dearest, thou unwearied friend!
Say, shouldst thou grieve to see my sorrows end?
Thou know'st a painful pilgrimage I've past;
And shouldst thou grieve that rest is come at last?
Rather rejoice to see me shake off life,
And die as I have liv'd, thy faithful wife.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA,

1720,

Was the daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, of Sidmonton, in the county of Southampton. She was Maid of Honour to the Duchess of York, second wife of James the Second, and married Heneage, Earl of Winchelsea. She died in 1720.

Her poems have been highly admired for their simplicity and naturalness. She seems to have been the precursor of the school of Cowper. "It is remarkable," says Wordsworth, "that excepting *The nocturnal Reverie* (one of Lady Winchelsea's poems), and the *Windsor Forest* of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publications of *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* does not contain a single new image of external nature."

A NOCTURNAL REVERIE.

In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confin'd,
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;
Or from some tree, fam'd for the owl's delight,
She, hollowing clear, directs the wanderer right:
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heavens' mysterious face;

When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshen'd grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip shelter'd grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
When scatter'd glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Show trivial beauties watch their hour to shine;
Whilst Sal'sbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect virtue bright:
When odours which declin'd repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose;
While sun-burnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling hay-cocks thicken up the vale:
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;

But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the' inferior world, and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all 's confus'd again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Or pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

In reply to some lines of Pope's addressed to her concerning *The Rape of the Lock*, the Countess writes thus playfully to her clever antagonist: —

Disarm'd with so genteel an air,
The contest I give o'er;
Yet, Alexander, have a care,
And shock the sex no more.

We rule the world our whole life's space;
Men but assume that right;
First slaves to every tempting face,
Then martyrs to our spite.

You of one Orpheus sure have read,
Who would like you have writ,
Had he in London town been bred,
And polish'd, too, his wit.

But he, poor soul! thought all was well,
And great should be his fame,

When he had left his wife in hell,
And birds and beasts could tame.

Yet venturing then with scoffing rhymes,
The women to incense,
Resenting heroines of those times
Soon punish'd his offence.

And as the Hebrews roll'd his scull,
And harp besmear'd with blood,
They clashing as the waves grew full,
Still harmonis'd the flood.

But you our follies gently treat,
And spin so fine the thread,
You need not fear his awkward fate,
The Lock won't cost the Head.

Our admiration you command,
For all that's gone before;
What next we look for at your hand
Can only raise it more.

Yet, sooth, the ladies I advise
(As me to pride has wrought),
We're born to wit, but to be wise
By admonitions taught.

The following, for aptness and point, might have come from the pen of Cowper:—

THE ATHEIST AND THE ACORN.

Methinks the world is oddly made,
And every thing 's amiss,
A dull, presuming Atheist said,
As stretch'd he lay beneath a shade,
And instanc'd it in this:

Behold, quoth he, that mighty thing,
A pumpkin large and round,
Is held but by a little string,
Which upwards cannot make it spring,
Or bear it from the ground.

While on this oak an acorn small,
So disproportion'd grows;
That who with sense surveys this all,
This universal casual ball,
Its ill contrivance knows.

My better judgment would have hung
The pumpkin on the tree,
And left the acorn, lightly strung,
'Mongst things which on the surface sprung,
And small and feeble be.

No more the caviller could say,
Nor farther faults descry;
For as he upwards gazing lay,
An acorn, loosen'd from its stay,
Fell down upon his eye.

The wounded part with tears ran o'er,
As punish'd for the sin;
Fool! had that bough a pumpkin bore,
Thy whimsies would have work'd no more,
Nor scull have kept them in.

In the ensuing extract, too, there is much well-expressed thought and harmonious versification.

LIFE'S PROGRESS.

How gaily is at first begun
Our life's uncertain race!
Whilst yet that sprightly morning sun,
With which we just set out to run,
Enlightens all the place.

How smiling the world's prospect lies,
How tempting to go through!
Not Canaan to the prophet's eyes,
From Pisgah, with a sweet surprise,
Did more inviting shew.

How soft the first ideas prove,
Which wander through our minds!
How full the joys, how free the love,
Which does that early season move,
As flow'rs the western winds!

Our sighs are then but vernal air,
But April drops our tears,
Which swiftly passing, all grows fair,
Whilst beauty compensates our care,
And youth each vapour clears.

But oh! too soon, alas! we climb,
Scarce feeling, we ascend
The gently rising hill of Time,
From whence with grief we see that prime,
And all its sweetness end.

The die now cast, our station known,
Fond expectation past;
The thorns which former days had sown,
To crops of late repentance grown,
Through which we toil at last.

Whilst every care 's a driving harm,
That helps to bear us down;
Which faded smiles no more can charm,
But every tear 's a winter-storm,
And every look 's a frown.

SONG.

Would we attain the happiest state
That is design'd us here;
No joy a rapture must create,
No grief beget despair:

No injury fierce anger raise,
No honour tempt to pride;
No vain desires of empty praise
Must in the soul abide:

No charms of youth or beauty move
The constant settled breast:
Who leaves a passage free to love,
Shall let in all the rest.

In such a heart soft peace will live,
Where none of these abound;
The greatest blessing Heav'n does give,
Or can on earth be found.

One of Lady Winchelsea's most powerful productions is her poem called *The Spleen*. I extract a few lines from this fine apostrophe:

Patron thou art to every gross abuse,
The sullen husband's feign'd excuse,
When the ill humour with his wife he spends,
And bears recruited wit and spirits to his friends.
The son of Bacchus pleads thy power,
As to the glass he still repairs
Pretends but to remove thy cares,
Snatch from thy shades one gay and smiling hour,
And drown thy kingdom in a purple shower.

* * * * *

By thee, Religion, all we know
That should enlighten here below,
Is veil'd in darkness, and perplext
With anxious doubts, with endless scruples vext,
And some restraint implied from each perverted text:
Whilst Touch not, Taste not, what is freely given,
Is but thy niggard voice, disgracing bounteous Heaven.

ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

1691—1721.

THE "Vanessa" of Swift; to whom the following lines refer.

ODE TO SPRING.

Hail, blushing goddess, beauteous Spring!
Who in thy jocund train doth bring
Loves and graces, smiling hours,
Balmy breezes, fragrant flowers;
Come, with tints of roseate hue,
Nature's faded charms renew.

Yet why should I thy presence hail?
To me no more the breathing gale
Comes fraught with sweets, no more the rose
With such transcendent beauty blows,
As when Cadenus blest the scene,
And shared with me those joys serene.
When, unperceiv'd, the lambent fire
Of friendship kindled new desire;
Still listening to his tuneful tongue,
The truths which angels might have sung
Divine imprest their gentle sway,
And sweetly stole my soul away.

My guide, instructor, lover, friend,
Dear names, in one idea blend;
Oh! still conjoin'd, your incense rise,
And waft sweet odours to the skies.

SUSANNA CENTLIVRE,

1660—1723,

Was born about 1660. Her maiden name was Freeman. Her third husband, Joseph Centlivre, was one of Queen Anne's cooks. He fell in love with her at Windsor, where she performed the part of Alexander the Great, in Lee's play of that name. She will long be remembered as the authoress of *The Wonder*, *The Busy Body*, and other clever but gross comedies.

The following is the Prologue to her Play of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*: —

To-night we come upon a bold design,
To try to please without one borrowed line:
Our plot is new and regularly clear,
And not one single tittle from Molière.
O'er buried poets we with caution tread,
And parish sextons leave to rob the dead.
For you, bright British fair, in hopes to charm ye,
We bring to-night a lover from the army.
You know the soldiers have the strangest arts,
Such a proportion of prevailing parts,
You 'd think that they rid post to women's hearts.
I wonder whence they draw their bold pretence;
We do not choose them sure for our defence:
That plea is both impolitic and wrong,
And only suits such dames as want a tongue.

Is it their eloquence and fine address?
The softness of their language? — Nothing less.
Is it their courage, that they bravely dare
To storm the sex at once? — Egad! 'tis there:
They act by us as in the rough campaign;
Unmindful of repulses, charge again:
They mine and countermine, resolv'd to win,
And if a breach is made, they will come in.
You 'll think, by what we have of soldiers said,
Our female wit was in the service bred:
But she is to the hardy toil a stranger;
She loves the cloth, indeed, but hates the danger:
Yet to this circle of the brave and gay
She bids one, for her good intentions, say
She hopes you 'll not reduce her to half-pay.
As for our Play, 'tis English humour all;
Then will you let our manufacture fall?
Would you the honour of our nation raise,
Keep English credit up, and English plays.

MRS. CATHERINE COCKBURN.

1679—1749.

THIS lady was the daughter of Captain David Trotter, a Scottish gentleman, who lived in the reign of Charles the Second, to whom he was well known, and who called him "honest David." Our authoress was born in 1679, and gave early marks of genius. At fourteen she wrote very excellent verses; and at seventeen produced a tragedy, called *Agnes de Castro*, which was acted with great success at the Royal Theatre. In 1700, when twenty-one years of age, we find her to be one of nine ladies who wrote a joint work, entitled *The Nine Muses, or Poems written by so many Ladies upon the Death of the late famous John Dryden, Esquire.* About this time she married Mr. Cockburn, a clergyman, who falling into a scruple about the oath of abjuration, was obliged to give up his curacy. Notwithstanding the difficulties and privations she had to endure under these circumstances, Mrs. Cockburn appears to have followed her literary pursuits with even greater ardour; and she wrote, besides her plays and poems, some remarkably clever and acute treatises in defence of the philosophy of Locke. Her *Vindication of Locke's Christian Principles* is an extremely powerful piece of reasoning.

After suffering some considerable changes of fortune,

Mrs. Cockburn died on the 11th May, 1749, in the seventieth year of her age.

Her poetry has a compression of thought and an ease of style which greatly distinguish it from the verse of most female writers in her time.

THE CAUTION.

Soft kisses may be innocent,
  But ah! too easy maid, beware;
Though that is all thy kindness meant,
  'Tis love's delusive fatal snare.

No virgin e'er at first design'd
  Through all the maze of love to stray;
But each new path allures her mind,
  Till, wandering on, she lose her way.

'Tis easy ere set out to stay;
  But who the useful art can teach,
When sliding down a steepy way,
  To stop, before the end we reach?

Keep ever something in thy power
  Beyond what would thy honour stain:
He will not dare to aim at more,
  Who for small favours sighs in vain.

THE VAIN ADVICE.

Ah, gaze not on those eyes! forbear
That soft enchanting voice to hear:
Not looks of basilisks give surer death,
Nor Syrens sing with more destructive breath.

Fly, if thy freedom thou 'dst maintain:
Alas! I feel the advice is vain!
A heart whose safety but in flight does lie,
Is too far lost to have the power to fly.

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ELIZABETH THOMAS.

1675—1730.

THE following poem from the pen of this lady had a singular origin. Mrs. Thomas became much disturbed in her mind respecting the doctrine of predestination, and, after studying the chief writers on that subject, found herself, as many besides her have done, more and more perplexed. Upon this she retired (as is related in her Memoirs) to her closet, where, after a most serious discussion of this point with herself, she formed the following poem; which she often read to confirm her in her sentiments. It is a fine burst of womanly faith.

PREDESTINATION; OR THE RESOLUTION.

Ah! strive no more to know what fate
  Is pre-ordain'd for thee:
'Tis vain in this my mortal state,
  For Heaven's inscrutable decree
Will only be reveal'd in vast Eternity.
    Then, O my soul!
Remember thy celestial birth,
And live to Heaven while here on earth:
  Thy God is infinitely true —
  All Justice, yet all Mercy, too:

To Him, then, through thy Saviour pray
For grace, to guide thee on thy way,
And give thee Will to do.
But humbly, for the rest, my soul!
Let Hope, and Faith, the limits be
Of thy presumptuous curiosity!

In the *Life of Mrs. Thomas*, prefixed to *Pylades and Corinna* (2d edit. 1736), the authoress relates the history of this poem, as given above. She goes on to say that "she languished for some time in perplexity upon the awful subject of Fate and Freewill; and hearing that Bishop Burnet's *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles* was in the press, she waited the publication with the utmost impatience. But alas! she was never the nearer: for the Bishop stated the different opinions of each sect with such candour, that it was impossible to find out which he most leaned to himself.

Mrs. Thomas received from Dryden the poetical name of Corinna; and she figures in *The Dunciad*.

MARY BARBER.

1734.

Of this lady I have been able to learn but little. All that I can say of her is that she was the wife of a tradesman in Dublin, and that, in 1734, she published a volume of poems, prefaced by a letter from Dean Swift to John Earl of Orrery. I have never been able to meet with this book, although I have diligently searched for it. For the following extract I am indebted to the Reverend Mr. Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses.*

ON SENDING MY SON AS A PRESENT TO DR. SWIFT, DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

A curious statue, we are told,
Is priz'd above its weight in gold;
If the fair form the hand confess
Of Phidias, or Praxiteles:
But if the artist could inspire
The smallest spark of heavenly fire,
Though but enough to make it walk,
Salute the company, or talk,
This would advance the prize so high,
What prince were rich enough to buy?
Such if Hibernia could obtain,
She sure would give it to the Dean:

So to her patriot should she pay
Her thanks upon his natal day.

A richer present I design,
A finished form, of work divine,
Surpassing all the power of art;
A thinking head, a grateful heart:
A heart that hopes, one day, to show
How much we to the Drapier owe.
Kings could not send a nobler gift,
A meaner were unworthy Swift.

MRS. ELIZABETH ROWE,

1736,

WAS the daughter of Mr. Walter Singer, a gentleman of good family in London. In her twenty-second year she published a volume of poems, which met with much success. In 1710 she married Mr. Thomas Rowe, a literary gentleman, who died a few years after their marriage. Mrs. Rowe died in 1736. She is well known as the writer of a work entitled *Letters from the Dead to the Living.*

HYMN.

The glorious armies of the sky
To Thee, Almighty King,
Triumphant anthems consecrate,
And hallelujahs sing.

But still their most exalted flights
Fall vastly short of Thee:
How distant then must human praise
From Thy perfection be!

Yet how, my God, shall I refrain,
When to my ravish'd sense
Each creature every where around
Displays thy excellence?

The active lights that shine above
In their eternal dance,
Reveal their skilful Maker's praise
With silent elegance.

The blushes of the morn confess
That thou art still more fair,
When in the East its beams revive,
To gild the fields of air.

The fragrant, the refreshing breeze,
Of every flowery bloom,
In balmy whispers own from Thee
Their pleasing odours come.

The singing birds, the warbling winds,
And water's murmuring fall;
To praise the First Almighty Cause
With different voices call.

Thy numerous Works exalt Thee thus,
And shall I silent be?
No; rather let me cease to breathe,
Than cease from praising Thee!

DESPAIR.

Oh! lead me to some solitary gloom,
Where no enlivening beams nor cheerful echoes come;
But silent all, and dusky let it be,
Remote and unfrequented but by me;

Mysterious, close, and sullen as that grief
Which leads me to its covert for relief.
Far from the busy world's detested noise,
Its wretched pleasures, and distracted joys;
Far from the jolly fools, who laugh and play,
And dance, and sing, impertinently gay,
Their short inestimable hours away;
Far from the studious follies of the great,
The tiresome farce of ceremonious state.
There, in a melting, solemn, dying strain,
Let me all day upon my lyre complain,
And wind up all its soft harmonious strings
To noble, serious, melancholy things.
And let no human foot but mine e'er trace
The close recesses of the sacred place:
Nor let a bird of cheerful note come near,
To whisper out his airy raptures here.
Only the pensive songstress of the grove—
Let her, by mine, her mournful notes improve;
While drooping winds among the branches sigh,
And sluggish waters heavily roll by.
Here to my fatal sorrows let me give
The short remaining hours I have to live.
Then with a sullen, deep-fetched groan expire,
And to the grave's dark solitude retire.

Among Prior's Poems will be found "An Answer to Mrs. Singer's Pastoral on Love and Friendship."

JANE BRERETON.

1685--1740.

THIS clever writer, who was very popular in her own day, was the daughter of Mr. Thomas Hughes, a gentleman of good family, in Flintshire, where she was born in 1685. In 1711 she married Mr. Thomas Brereton, of Oxford University; with whom, however, she lived so unhappily, that a separation took place a few years after their union. In 1721 she retired into Wales; and she died in 1740.

It was the custom of literary ladies in the seventeenth century to assume some fanciful name, and to write under that appellation. Mrs. Brereton signed herself "Melissa," and under that *nom de guerre* acquired some celebrity in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. She particularly distinguished herself in some poetical controversies which were carried on in that work. For readiness, tact, and good, strong, witty satire she has not many superiors among lady-writers.

Mrs. Brereton's productions are by no means remarkable for the delicacy and gracefulness that usually distinguish the writings of the female sex: on the contrary, there is a roughness, a vigour, a breadth in them, which might lead the reader to fancy that the productions of Melissa proceeded from the pen of a gentleman, rather than from that of a lady.

There is something very charming in the disdain with which she addresses one of her lovers:

TO DAMON.

Cease, Damon, cease, I 'll hear no more;
Your fulsome flattery give o'er;
I scorn this mean fallacious art
By which you'd steal, not win, my heart:
In me it never can compassion move,
And sooner will aversion raise than love.

If you to love would me incline,
Assert the man, forbear to whine;
Let time and plain sincerity
And faithful love your pleaders be;
For trust me, Damon, if those fail,
These servile wheedling tricks will ne'er prevail.

Poor Damon must have looked rather sheepish, one fancies, at such a rebuke as this from his mistress; and the gentleman named below—Philotinus—must equally have felt that he got, in sporting phrase, "decidedly the worst of it."

TO PHILOTINUS.

Philotinus! if you'd approve
Yourself a faithful lover,—
You must no more my anger move,
But in the mildest terms of love
Your passion still discover.

Though born to rule, you must submit
To my command with awe;
Nor think your sex can you acquit,
For Cupid's empire won't admit
Nor own, a Salic Law.

Mrs. Brereton's satire is of an equally bold, strong, and stinging sort. The following lines have been generally, but erroneously, attributed to Lord Chesterfield:

ON BEAU NASH'S PICTURE AT FULL LENGTH, BETWEEN THE BUSTS OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON AND MR. POPE.

The old Egyptians hid their wit
In hieroglyphic dress,
To give men pains to search for it,
And please themselves with guess.

Moderns, to tread the self-same path,
And exercise our parts,
Place figures in a room at Bath,—
Forgive them, God of Arts!

Newton, if I can judge aright,
All wisdom doth express;
His knowledge gives mankind new light,
And swells their happiness.

Pope is the emblem of true wit,
The sunshine of the mind;
Read o'er his works for proof of it,
You'll endless pleasure find.

Nash represents man in the mass,
Made up of wrong and right;
Sometimes a knave, sometimes an ass,
Now blunt, and now polite.

The picture, placed the busts between,
Adds to the thought much strength;
Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
But Folly's at full length.

MARY CHANDLER,

1687—1745,

WAS the daughter of a dissenting minister at Bath. Pope commended her poetry. Sound sense and harmonious versification characterise her works.

TEMPERANCE.

Fatal effects of luxury and ease!
We drink our poison and we eat disease;
Indulge our senses at our reason's cost,
Till sense is pain, and reason hurt or lost.
Not so, O Temperance bland! when rul'd by thee,
The brute 's obedient, and the man is free.
Soft are his slumbers, balmy is his rest,
His veins not boiling from the midnight feast.
Touch'd by Aurora's rosy hand, he wakes
Peaceful and calm, and with the world partakes
The joyful dawnings of returning day,
For which their grateful thanks the whole creation pay; —
All but the human brute: 'tis he alone,
Whose works of darkness fly the rising sun.
'Tis to thy rules, O Temperance! that we owe
All pleasures, which from health and strength can flow;
Vigour of body, purity of mind,
Unclouded reason, sentiments refin'd,
Unmixt, untainted joys without remorse,
The intemperate sinner's never failing curse.

ELIZA HAYWOOD,

1693—1756,

WAS the daughter of a London tradesman, and was born in the year 1693. She wrote several books, chiefly novels, one of which, *Betsy Thoughtless*, is said to have suggested Miss Burney's *Evelina*. She died in 1756.

EXTRACT FROM THE TEA TABLE.

Ximene, fearing to be forsaken by Palemon, desires he would kill her.

If by my words my soul could be exprest,
You will not wonder at my fond request:
But in compassion with my wish partake,
'Tis kinder far to kill than to forsake.
'Tis not long life, but glorious death, renowns
The hero's honours, and the martyr crowns;
Laurels acquired in youth, in age decay,
Or by superior force are torn away,
To deck some new-made, hated, favourite's brow,
Who in the noble ruin great does grow.
A happy end is still the wise man's prayer,
Death is a safe, a sure retreat from care.
Should I live longer, I may lose your love,
And all the hells of desperation prove.
But now to die—now, in my joy's high noon,
Ere the cold evening of contempt comes on,

Were to die blest; and baffle cruel fate,
Which, envious, watches close to change my state.
Nay, more, to die *for thee!* and *by thee*, too!
Would all my rival's happiness outdo:
My love would live for ever in thy mind,
And I should pity those I left behind.
To have those eyes, dear heaven-drest orbs of light,
Convey soft pity to expiring sight,
That voice, whose every melting note inspires
Dissolving languishments, and warm desires,
Tun'd to kind, mournful, murmurings at my pain,
Would give a pride which life could never gain!
Haste then, the joys of passion to refine,
Let through my breast thy glittering weapon shine,
Dispel my fears, and keep me ever thine!

Miss Haywood was, for some reason or other, included in Pope's *Dunciad;* but, says a writer on the subject, "it is probable that Pope was as much actuated by some provocation of a personal nature, as by indignation at the immorality of her early writings, for which, however, her later works greatly atoned."

ELIZABETH TOLLET,

1694—1754,

WAS the author of a volume of *Poems*, and *Susanna*, a sacred drama.

WINTER SONG.

Ask me no more my truth to prove,
What I would suffer for my love;
With thee I would in exile go
To regions of eternal snow;
O'er floods by solid ice confin'd,
Through forest bare, with northern wind;
While all around my eyes I cast,
Where all is wild, and all is waste.
If there the timorous stag you chase,
Or rouse to fight a fiercer race,
Undaunted, I thy arms would bear,
And give thy hand the hunter's spear.
When the low sun withdraws his light,
And menaces an half-year's night,
The conscious moon and stars above
Shall guide me with my wandering love.
Beneath the mountain's hollow brow,
Or in its rocky cells below,
Thy rural feast I would provide,
Nor envy palaces their pride;

The softest moss should dress thy bed,
With savage spoils about thee spread;
While faithful love the watch should keep,
To banish danger from thy sleep.

ON A DEATH'S HEAD.

On this resemblance, where we find
A portrait drawn from all mankind,
Fond lover! gaze awhile, to see
What beauty's idol charms shall be!
Where are the balls that once could dart
Quick lightning through the wounded heart?
The skin, whose tint could once unite
The glowing red and polished white?
The lip in brighter ruby drest?
The cheek with dimpled smiles oppress?
The rising front, where beauty sate
Thron'd in her residence of state;
Which, half disclos'd, and half conceal'd,
The hair in flowing ringlets veil'd?
'Tis vanished all! remains alone
The eyeless scalp of naked bone;
The vacant orbits sunk within;
The jaw that offers at a grin.
Is this the object, then, that claims
The tribute of our youthful flames?
Must amorous hopes and fancied bliss,
Too dear delusions, end in this?

How high does Melancholy swell!
Which sighs can more than language tell;
Till Love can only grieve or fear;
Reflect a while, then drop a tear
For all that's beautiful or dear.

LÆTITIA PILKINGTON.

1712—1750.

THIS lady, the daughter of Dr. Van Lewen, of Dublin, and wife of the Reverend Mr. Pilkington, was born in 1712, and manifested her poetical genius at an early age. She acquired much fame by her writings, which, however, are not quite so chaste and moral as they might be. She died in 1750.

One of the best and purest of her productions is the following

ODE, IN IMITATION OF HORACE.

I envy not the proud their wealth,
Their equipage and state;
Give me but innocence and health,
I ask not to be great.

I in this sweet retirement find
A joy unknown to kings;
For sceptres to a virtuous mind
Seem vain and empty things.

Great Cincinnatus at his plough
With brighter lustre shone,
Than guilty Cæsar e'er could show,
Though seated on a throne.

Tumultuous days, and restless nights,
Ambition ever knows,
A stranger to the calm delights
Of study and repose.

Then free from envy, care, and strife,
Keep me, ye powers divine!
And pleas'd, when ye demand my life,
May I that life resign!

Mrs. Pilkington's sharp, clever style, is well seen in the succeeding

SONG.

Lying is an occupation
Us'd by all who mean to rise;
Politicians owe their station
But to well-concerted lies.

These to lovers give assistance
To ensnare the fair one's heart,
And the virgin's best resistance
Yields to this commanding art.

Study this superior science,
Would you rise in church or state,
Bid to truth a bold defiance,
'Tis the practice of the great.

MARY LEAPOR,

1722—1746,

Was the daughter of the gardener of Judge Blencowe, of Marston St. Lawrence, in Northamptonshire; and it is said that she was herself in service. Her writings, of which two volumes have appeared, display very considerable genius.

THE TEMPLE OF LOVE — A DREAM.

When lonely night composed the drowsy mind,
And hush'd the bosom of the weary hind,
Pleas'd with plain nature, and with simple life,
I read the scenes of Shore's deluded wife,
Till my faint spirits sought the silent bed,
And on its pillow dropt my aching head;
Then fancy, ever to her Mira kind,
Prepar'd her phantoms for the roving mind.

Behold a fabric rising from the ground,
To the soft timbrel and the cittern's sound;
Corinthian pillars the vast building hold,
Of polished silver, and Peruvian gold;
In four broad arches spread the shining doors,
The blazing roofs enlighten all the floors:
Beneath a sparkling canopy, that shone
With Persian jewels, like a morning sun,

Wrapp'd in a robe of purest Tyrian dye,
Cytherea's image met the ravish'd eye;
Whose glowing features would in point beguile,
So well the artist drew her mimic smile.
Her shining eyes confess'd a sprightly joy,
Upon her knees reclined her wanton boy;
On the bright walls around her and above,
Were drawn the statutes and the arts of love:
These taught the silent language of the eye,
The broken whisper, and amusing lie;
The careless glance peculiar to the fair,
And vows of lovers that dissolve in air;
The graceful anger, and the rolling eyes,
The practis'd blush, and counterfeit surprise,
The language proper for pretending swains,
And fine description for imagin'd pains;
The friendly caution, and designing ease,
And all the arts that ruin while they please.

Now enter'd, follow'd by a splendid train,
A blooming damsel and a wealthy swain;
The gaudy youth in shining robes array'd;
Behind him follow'd the unthinking maid:
Youth in her cheek like opening roses sprung,
Her careless tresses on her shoulders hung.
Her smiles were cheerful as enlivening May;
Her dress was careless, and her eyes were gay.
Then to soft voices and melodious sound
The board was spread, the sparkling glasses crown'd;
The sprightly virgin in a moment shines
In the gay product of the eastern mines;

Then Pride comes in with patches for the fair,
And spicy odours for her curling hair;
Rude Riot, in a crimson vest array'd,
With smooth-faced Flattery like a chambermaid;
Soft Pomp and Pleasure at her elbow stand,
And Folly shakes the rattles in her hand.

But now her feeble structure seem'd to shake;
Its bases trembled, and its pillars quake;
Then rush'd Suspicion through the lofty gate,
With heart-sick Loathing, led by ghastly Hate;
And foaming Rage, to close the horrid band,
With a drawn poniard in her trembling hand.
Now like an earthquake shook the reeling frame,
The lamps extinguish in a purple flame;
One universal groan was heard, and then
The cries of women, and the voice of men:
Some roar out vengeance, some for mercy call,
And shrieks and tumult fill the dreadful hall;

At length the spectres vanish'd from my sight;
Again the lamps resum'd a feeble light,
But chang'd the place: no splendour there was shown,
But gloomy walls, that mirth had never known;
For the gay dome where pleasure us'd to dwell
Appear'd an abbey, and a doleful cell;
And here the sad, the ruin'd nymph was found,
Her robe disorder'd, and her locks unbound;
While from her eyes the pearly drops of woe
Wash'd her pale cheek, where roses us'd to blow:
Her blue and trembling lips prepar'd to breathe
The sighs that made her swelling bosom heave;

Thus, stupid with her grief, she sat and prest
Her lily hands across her pensive breast:
A group of ghastly phantoms stood behind,
Whose task it is to rack the guilty mind;
Wide-mouth'd Reproach with visage rude and thin,
And hissing Scandal, made a hideous din;
Remorse, that darted from her deadly wings
Invenom'd arrows and a thousand stings;
Then with pale cheeks, and with a ghastly stare,
Peep'd o'er her shoulder hollow-eyed Despair,
Whose hand extended bore a bleeding heart,
And Death behind her shook his threatening dart:
These forms with horror fill'd my aching breast,
And from my eyelids drove the balm of rest:
I woke, and found old night her course had run,
And left her empire to the rising sun.

HENRIETTA, LADY LUXBOROUGH,

1756,

WAS half sister to the famous Lord Bolingbroke. In Dodsley's Collection, some pieces of poetry, ascribed to a *Lady of Quality*, proceeded from her pen; one of them is given here. A volume of her Letters to Shenstone was printed in 1775. She died in 1756.

THE BULLFINCH IN TOWN.

Hark to the blackbird's pleasing note,
Sweet usher of the vocal throng!
Nature directs his warbling throat,
And all that hear, admire the song.

Yon bullfinch, with unvaried tone,
Of cadence harsh, and accent shrill,
Has brighter plumage to atone
For want of harmony and skill.

Yet discontent with nature's boon,
Like man, to mimic art he flies;
On Opera-pinions hoping soon
Unrivall'd he shall mount the skies.

And while to please some courtly fair,
He one dull tune with labour learns,
A well-gilt cage remote from air
And faded plumes, is all he earns!

Go, hapless captive! still repeat
The sounds which nature never taught;
Go, listening fair! and call them sweet,
Because you know them dearly bought.

Unenvied both! go hear and sing
Your studied music o'er and o'er;
Whilst I attend th' inviting spring,
In fields where birds unfetter'd soar.

MRS. PENNINGTON,

1734—1759,

WAS the author of a poem called *The Copper Farthing*, an imitation of *The Splendid Shilling*, and some miscellaneous verses, one of which productions is subjoined. She died in 1759, aged 25.

ODE TO MORNING.

Hail, roseate Morn! returning light!
To thee the sable queen of night
  Reluctant yields her sway;
And, as she quits the dappled skies,
On glories greater glories rise,
  To greet the dawning day.

O'er tufted meads gay Flora trips;
Arabia's spices scent her lips,
  Her head with rose-buds crown'd;
Mild Zephyr hastes to snatch a kiss,
And, fluttering with the transient bliss,
  Wafts fragrance all around.

The dew-drops, daughters of the Morn,
With spangles every bush adorn,
  And all the broider'd vales;
Their voice to thee the linnets raise,
The lark, soft-trilling in thy praise,
  Aurora, rising, hails!

While nature, nôw in lively vest
Of glory green, has gaily drest
  Each tributary plain;
While blooming flowers, and blossom'd trees,
Soft waving with the vernal breeze,
  Exult beneath thy reign;

Shall I with drowsy poppies crown'd
By sleep in silken fetters bound,
  The downy god obey?
Ah no! through yon embowering grove,
Or winding valley let me rove,
  And own thy cheerful sway!

For short-lived are thy pleasing powers:
Pass but a few uncertain hours,
  And we no more shall trace
Thy dimpled cheek, and brow serene;
Or clouds may gloom the smiling scene,
  And frowns deform thy face.

So in life's youthful bloomy prime,
We sport away the fleeting time,
  Regardless of our fate;
But by some unexpected blow
Our giddy follies we shall know,
  And mourn them when too late!

MARY MASTERS,

1750,

PUBLISHED poems, which, as Boswell informs us, were corrected by Dr. Johnson. I extract as a specimen the subjoined verses.

TO LUCINDA.

Lucinda, you in vain dissuade
  Two hearts from mutual love;
What amorous youth, or tender maid,
  Could e'er their flames remove?

What if the charms in him I see
  Only exist in thought;
Yet Cupid, like the Mede's decree,
  Is firm, and changeth not.

Seek not to know my passion's spring,
  The reason to discover;
For reason is an useless thing,
  When we've commenc'd the lover.

Should lovers quarrel with their fate,
  And ask the reason why
They are condemn'd to dote on that,
  Or for this object die?

They must not hope for a reply,
And this is all they know;
They sigh, and weep, and rave, and die
Because it must be so.

Love is a mighty god, you know,
That rules with potent sway;
And when he draws his awful bow,
We mortals must obey.

Since you the fatal strife endur'd,
And yielded to his dart;
How can I hope to be secur'd,
And guard a weaker heart?

MRS. MADAN.

About 1750.

One of the Cowper family, and the wife of Colonel Madan.

VERSES

Written in her brother's Coke upon Littleton.

O thou, who labour'st in this rugged mine,
Mayst thou to gold th' unpolish'd ore refine!
May each dark page unfold its haggard brow!
Doubt not to reap, if thou can'st bear to plough.
To tempt thy care, may, each revolving night,
Purses and maces swim before thy sight!
From hence in times to come, adventurous deed!
Mayst thou essay to look and speak like Mead!
When the black bag and rose no more shall shade
With martial air the honours of thy head;
When the full wig thy visage shall enclose,
And only leave to view thy learned nose;
Safely mayst thou defy beaux, wits, and scoffers,
While tenants, in fee simple, stuff thy coffers!

Our author's brother appears to have followed this advice very closely, for he became Lord Chancellor of England.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

1690—1762.

THE celebrated daughter of the Duke of Kingston. She was born in 1690. Her fame chiefly rests upon her *Letters*. Her poetry is of rather a coarse, masculine, sensuous order, and is quite destitute of imagination. It has, however, some good sensible touches that go far to redeem it from the charge of mediocrity. She died in 1762.

THE LADY'S RESOLVE.

Whilst thirst of praise and vain desire of fame
In every age is every woman's aim;
With courtship pleas'd, of silly toasters proud,
Fond of a train, and happy in a crowd;
On each proud fop bestowing some kind glance,
Each conquest owing to some loose advance:
While vain coquettes affect to be pursued,
And think they 're virtuous if not grossly lewd:
Let this great maxim be my virtue's guide;
In part she is to blame that has been tried:
He comes too near that comes to be denied.

HYMN TO THE MOON.

Thou silver deity of secret night,
Direct my footsteps through the woodland shade;
Thou conscious witness of unknown delight,
The lover's guardian, and the muse's aid!

By thy pale beams I solitary rove,
To thee my tender grief confide,
Serenely sweet you gild the silent grove,
My friend, my goddess, and my guide!

Even thee, fair queen, from thy amazing height,
The charms of young Endymion drew;
Veil'd with the mantle of concealing night;
With all thy greatness, and thy coldness, too.

ADVICE.

Good madam, when ladies are willing,
A man must needs look like a fool;
For me I would not give a shilling
For one who would love out of rule.

You should leave us to guess by your blushing,
And not speak the matter so plain;
'Tis ours to write and be pushing,
'Tis yours to affect a disdain.

That you are in a terrible taking,
By all these sweet oglings I see;
But the fruit that can fall without shaking
Indeed is too mellow for me.

AN ANSWER TO A LADY WHO ADVISED LADY M. TO RETIRE.

You little know the heart that you advise;
I view this various scene with equal eyes;
In crowded court I find myself alone,
And pay my worship to a nobler throne.

Long since the value of this world I knew;
Pitied the folly and despised the shew:
Well as I can, my tedious part I bear,
And wait dismissal without pain or fear.

Seldom I mark mankind's detested ways,
Not hearing censure, nor affecting praise;
And unconcern'd, my future fate I trust
To that sole Being merciful and just.

FRANCES SHERIDAN,

1724—1767,

THE mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, was born in 1724. Her maiden name was Chamberlaine. She is chiefly known by her novels of *Sidney Biddulph* and *Nourjahad.* She died in 1767.

ODE TO PATIENCE.

Unaw'd by threats, unmov'd by force,
My steady soul pursues her course,
  Collected, calm, resign'd;
Say, you who search with curious eyes
The source whence human actions rise,
  Say, whence this turn of mind?

'Tis Patience! lenient goddess, hail!
O let thy votary's vows prevail,
  Thy threaten'd flight to stay;
Long hast thou been a welcome guest,
Long reign'd an inmate in this breast,
  And rul'd with gentle sway.

Through all the various turns of fate,
Ordain'd me in each several state,
  My wayward lot has known;
What taught me silently to bear,
To curb the sigh, to check the tear,
  When sorrow weigh'd me down?

'Twas Patience! temperate goddess, stay!
For still thy dictates I obey,
Nor yield to passion's power;
Though by injurious foes borne down,
My fame, my toil, my hopes o'erthrown,
In one ill-fated hour.

When robb'd of what I held most dear,
My hands adorn'd the mournful bier
Of her I lov'd so well;
What, when mute sorrow chain'd my tongue,
As o'er the sable hearse I hung
Forbade the tide to swell?

'Twas Patience! goddess ever calm!
O pour into my breast thy balm,
That antidote to pain;
Which flowing from thy nectar'd urn,
By chemistry divine can turn
Our losses into gain.

When sick and languishing in bed,
Sleep from my restless couch had fled,
(Sleep which e'en pain beguiles,)
What taught me calmly to sustain
A feverish being, rack'd with pain,
And dress'd my looks in smiles?

'Twas Patience! Heaven-descended maid
Implored, flew swiftly to my aid,
And lent her fostering breast;

Watch'd my sad hours with parent care,
Repell'd the approaches of despair,
And sooth'd my soul to rest.

Say, when dissevered from his side,
My friend, protector, and my guide —
When my prophetic soul,
Anticipating all the storm,
Saw danger in its direst form,
What could my fears control?

'Twas Patience! gentle goddess, hear!
Be ever to thy suppliant near,
Nor let one murmur rise;
Since still some mighty joys are given,
Dear to her soul, the gifts of heaven,—
The sweet domestic ties.

MARY JONES.

1750.

"Miss Jones lived at Oxford, and was often of our parties. She was a very ingenious poetess, and published a volume of poems; and, on the whole, was a most sensible, agreeable, and amiable woman. She was sister to the Reverend River Jones, chanter of Christchurch Cathedral at Oxford, and Johnson used to call her *The Chantress.* I have heard him often address her in this passage from *Il Penseroso,* 'Thee, chantress of the woods among, I woo,' &c. Note on a letter from Johnson to T. Warton, in 1757."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson,* vol. i.

In the preface to her volume, Miss Jones calls her poems "the produce of pure nature only, and most of them wrote at a very early age." Our author seems to have enjoyed considerable celebrity, for the names of a vast number of subscribers appear prefixed to the work alluded to,—*Miscellanies in Prose and Verse,* 1750.

I subjoin two specimens of Miss Jones's powers; by which it will be seen that she excelled in lively strains, and possessed a quaint and humorous genius.

I. EXTRACT FROM AN EPISTLE TO LADY BOWYER.

How much of paper 's spoil'd! what floods of ink!
And yet how few, how very few, can think!

The knack of writing is an easy trade;
But to think well requires — at least a head.
Once in an age one genius may arise,
With wit well cultured, and with learning wise:
Like some tall oak, behold his branches shoot,
No tender scions springing from the root.
Whilst lofty Pope erects his laurell'd head,
No lays like mine can live beneath his shade:
Nothing but weeds, and moss, and herbs, are found: —
Cut, cut them down; why cumber they the ground?

And yet you 'd have me write? — For what! To whom?
To curl a favourite in a dressing-room?
To mend a candle when the snuff 's too short?
Or save rappee for chambermaids at court?
Glorious ambition! — noble thirst of fame!
No! but you 'd have me write — to get a name!
Alas! I 'd live unknown, unenvy'd too;
'Tis more than Pope with all his wit can do.
'Tis more than you with wit and beauty join'd,
A pleasing form, and a discerning mind.
The world and I are no such cordial friends;
I have my purpose, they their various ends.
I say my prayers, and lead a sober life,
Nor laugh at Cornus, or at Cornus' wife.
What 's fame to me, who pray and pay my rent?
If my friends know me honest, I 'm content.

II. TO STELLA, AFTER THE SMALL-POX.

When skilful traders first set up,
To draw the people to their shop,

They straight hang out some gaudy sign,
Expressive of the goods within.
The Vintner has his boy and grapes,
The Haberdasher thread and tapes,
The Shoemaker exposes boots,
And Monmouth Street old tatter'd suits.

So fares it with the nymph divine;
For what is beauty but a sign?
A face hung out, through which is seen
The nature of the goods within.
Thus the coquette her beau ensnares
With studied smile and forward airs;
The graver prude hangs out a frown
To strike the audacious gazer down;
But she alone whose temperate wit
Each nicer medium can hit,
Is still adorn'd with every grace,
And wears a sample in her face.

What though some envious folks have said
That Stella now must hide her head,
That all her stock of beauty 's gone,
And e'en the very sign took down;
Yet grieve not at the fatal blow,
For if you break awhile, we know
'Tis bankrupt like, more rich to grow.
A fairer sign you 'll soon hang up,
And with fresh credit open shop;
For nature's pencil soon shall trace,
And once more finish off your face:
Which all your neighbours shall outshine,
And of your *Mind* remain the sign!

FRANCES BROOKE,

1745—1789,

WAS the daughter of a clergyman named Moore, residing in Devonshire, and wife of the Reverend J. Brooke. She was born in 1745, and died in 1789. Mrs. Brooke was the author of the operettas entitled *Rosina* and *Marian;* both of which are very elegant and pleasing productions. Besides these she wrote some novels, plays, and poems, which are now forgotten.

Mrs. Brooke's verses have a spirit, a clear, sparkling, living style, which is very delightful. The following song from *Marian* sounds like the shout of a clear merry voice ringing in the open morning air.

To the chase, to the chase! on the brow of the hill
Let the hounds meet the sweet-breathing morn;
Whilst full to the welkin, their notes clear and shrill,
Join the sound of the heart-cheering horn.
What music celestial! when urging the race
Sweet Echo repeats — "To the chase, to the chase!"

Our pleasure transports us, how gay flies the hour!
Sweet health and quick spirits attend;
Not sweeter when evening convenes to the bower,
And we meet the loved smile of a friend.
See the stag just before us! He starts at the cry: —
He stops—his strength fails—speak, my friends—must he die?

His innocent aspect while standing at bay,
His expression of anguish and pain,
All plead for compassion,—your looks seem to say
Let him bound o'er his forests again.
Quick, release him to dart o'er the neighbouring plain,
Let him live, let him bound o'er his forests again!

This last stanza is "pure womanly." No male writer would have let the stag loose again, or even have debated about his death. The conception is in my idea most beautifully feminine, and embodies one of the most exquisite touches of pity I know of.

The following little song, too, from the same opera, has something very plaintive in it.

By the osiers so dank,
As we sat on the bank,
And look'd at the swell of the billow,
This chaplet he wove
As a token of love;
Alas! 'twas the branch of the willow.

How sad all the day
Through the meadows I stray,
And rest flies at night from my pillow!
The garland I wore
From my ringlets I tore,
Alas! must I wear the green willow?

Here is another little sparkling piece; extracted from *Rosina.*

Her mouth, which a smile
Devoid of all guile,
  Half opens to view,
Is the bud of the rose
In the morning that blows,
  Impearl'd with the dew.

More fragrant her breath
Than the flow'r-scented heath
  At the dawning of day;
The hawthorn in bloom,
The lily's perfume,
  Or the blossoms of May.

Her *Ode to Health*, too, is a very graceful and harmonious composition.

ODE TO HEALTH.

The Lesbian lute no more can charm,
Nor my once panting bosom warm;
  No more I breathe the tender sigh;
Nor when my beauteous swain appears,
With downcast look and starting tears,
  Confess the lustre of his eye.

With Freedom blest, at early dawn,
I wander o'er the verdant lawn,
  And hail the sweet returning Spring;
The fragrant breeze, the feather'd choir
To raise my vernal joys conspire,
  While Peace and Health their treasures bring.

Come, lovely Health! divinest maid!
And lead me through the rural shade,
To thee the rural shades belong:
'Tis thine to bless the simple swain,
And, while he tries the tuneful strain,
To raise the raptur'd poet's song.

Behold the patient village hind!
No cares disturb his tranquil mind;
By thee, and sweet Contentment blest,
All day he turns the stubborn plain,
And meets at eve his infant train,
While guiltless pleasure fills his breast.

O ever good and bounteous! still
By fountain fresh, or murmuring rill,
Let me thy blissful presence find!
Thee, Goddess! thee my steps pursue,
When, careless of the morning dew,
I leave the lessening vales behind.

MRS. GREVILLE.

Of this lady, whose *Prayer for Indifference* has been so much admired, I can give no account.

PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE.

Oft I 've implor'd the gods in vain,
And pray'd till I 've been weary ;
For once I 'll seek my wish to gain
Of Oberon, the Fairy.

Sweet airy being, wanton sprite,
Who lurk'st in woods unseen,
And oft by Cynthia's silver light,
Trip'st gaily o'er the green :

If e'er thy pitying heart was mov'd,
As ancient stories tell,
And for the Athenian maid * who lov'd,
Thou sought'st a wondrous spell ;

O deign once more t' exert thy power !
Haply some herb or tree,
Sovereign as juice of western flower,
Conceals a balm for me.

* See " Midsummer Night's Dream."

I ask no kind return of love,
No tempting charm to please;
Far from the heart those gifts remove,
That sighs for peace and ease;

Nor peace, nor ease, the heart can know,
That, like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
But, turning, trembles too.

Far as distress the soul can wound,
'Tis pain in each degree;
'Tis bliss but to a certain bound,
Beyond, is agony.

Then take this treacherous sense of mine,
Which dooms me still to smart;
Which pleasure can to pain refine,
To pain new pangs impart.

O haste to shed the sovereign balm,
My shatter'd nerves new string;
And for my guest, serenely calm,
The nymph Indifference bring!

At her approach, see Hope, see Fear,
See Expectation fly!
And Disappointment in the rear,
That blasts the promis'd joy!

The tear which Pity taught to flow
The eye shall then disown;
The heart that melts for others' woe
Shall then scarce feel its own.

The wounds which now each moment bleed,
  Each moment then shall close;
And tranquil days shall still succeed
  To nights of calm repose.

O Fairy Elf! but grant me this,
  This one kind comfort send,
And so may never-fading bliss
  Thy flowery paths attend!

So may the glow-worm's glimmering light
  Thy tiny footsteps lead
To some new region of delight,
  Unknown to mortal tread!

And be thy acorn goblet filled
  With heaven's ambrosial dew,
From sweetest, freshest flowers distill'd,
  That shed fresh sweets for you!

And what of life remains for me
  I 'll pass in sober ease;
Half pleased, contented will I be,
  Content but half to please.

For the answer to this Poem, by the Countess of Carlisle, see page 214.

CONSTANTIA GRIERSON,

1706—1733,

WAS an Irish poetess, of extraordinary erudition. She was born in 1706. "She died," says Mrs. Mary Barber (with whose poems her own were published), "at the age of 27, and was allowed, long before, to be an excellent scholar, not only in Greek and Roman literature, but in history, divinity, philosophy, and mathematics. She gave a proof of her knowledge in the Latin tongue, by her dedication of the Dublin edition of Tacitus to the Lord Carteret, and by that of Terence to his son, to whom she likewise wrote a Greek epigram." Mrs. Pilkington informs us that she was also mistress of Hebrew; that her parents were poor, illiterate country people; and that when questioned how she had acquired such learning, she said "she had received some little instruction from the minister of the parish, when she could spare time from her needle-work, to which she was closely kept by her mother."

The following lines are addressed *To Miss Lætitia Van Lewen (afterwards Mrs. Pilkington) at a Country Assize.*

The fleeting birds may soon in ocean swim,
And northern whales through liquid azure skim;

The Dublin ladies their intrigues forsake,
To dress and scandal an aversion take;
When you can in the lonely forest walk,
And with some serious matron gravely talk
Of possets, poultices, and waters 'still'd,
And monstrous casks with mead and cider fill'd;
How many hives of bees she has in store,
And how much fruit her trees this summer bore;
Or, home returning, in the yard can stand,
And feed the chickens from your bounteous hand:
Of each one's top-knot tell, and hatching pry,
Like Tully, waiting for an augury.

When night approaches, down to table sit
With a great crowd, choice meat, and little wit;
What horse won the last race, how mighty Tray,
At the last famous hunting, caught the prey;
Surely you can't but such discourse despise,
Methinks I see displeasure in your eyes:
O my Lætitia! stay no longer there,
You 'll soon forget that you yourself are fair;
Why will you keep from us, from all that 's gay,
There in a lonely solitude to stay?
Where not a mortal through the year you view,
But bob-wigged hunters, who their game pursue
With so much ardour, they 'd a cock or hare
To thee in all thy blooming charms prefer.

You write of belles and beaux that there appear,
And gilded coaches, such as glitter here;
For gilded coaches, each estated clown
That gravely slumbers on the bench has one;

But beaux! they 're young attorneys sure you mean,
Who thus appear to your romantic brain.
Alas! no mortal there can talk to you,
That love, or wit, or softness ever knew;
All they can speak of 's *capias* and law,
And writs to keep the country fools in awe.
And if to wit or courtship they pretend,
'Tis the same way that they a cause defend;
In which they give of lungs a vast expense,
But little passion, thought, or eloquence:
Bad as they are, they 'd soon abandon you,
And gain and clamour in the town pursue.
So haste to town, if even such fools you prize,
O haste to town! and bless the longing eyes
Of your CONSTANTIA.

HENRIETTA O'NEIL,

1758—1793,

Was the only daughter of Charles, Viscount Dungarvon, and wife of John O'Neil, Esquire, of Slanes Castle, in the county of Antrim, who was created an Irish Peer about two months after the death of his wife. Lady O'Neil was born in 1758, and died in 1793.

The two poems here quoted have been preserved in the works of her friend, Charlotte Smith.

ODE TO THE POPPY.

Not for the promise of the labour'd field,
Not for the good the yellow harvests yield,
I bend at Ceres' shrine;
For dull to humid eyes appear
The golden glories of the year;
Alas! a melancholy worship's mine:

I hail the goddess for her scarlet flower!
Thou brilliant weed,
That dost so far exceed
The richest gifts gay Flora can bestow,
Heedless I pass'd thee in life's morning hour,
Thou comforter of woe,
Till sorrow taught me to confess thy power.

In early days, when Fancy cheats,
A varied wreath I wove,
Of laughing Spring's luxuriant sweets,
To deck ungrateful Love:

The rose, or thorn, my labours crown'd,
As Venus smil'd, or Venus frown'd,
But Love and Joy and all their train are flown;
E'en languid Hope no more is mine,
And I will sing of thee alone:
Unless perchance the attributes of Grief,
The cypress bud and willow leaf
Their pale funereal foliage blend with thine.

Hail, lovely blossom! thou canst ease
The wretched victims of Disease;
Canst close those weary eyes in gentle sleep,
Which never open but to weep;
For oh! thy potent charm
Can agonizing Pain disarm;
Expel imperious Memory from her seat,
And bid the throbbing heart forget to beat.

Soul-soothing plant, that can such blessings give,
By thee the mourner bears to live!
By thee the hopeless die!
Oh, ever friendly to despair,
Might Sorrow's pallid votary dare,
Without a crime that remedy implore,
Which bids the spirit from its bondage fly,
I'd court thy palliative aid no more.

No more I'd sue that thou shouldst spread
Thy spell around my aching head;
But would conjure thee to impart
Thy balsam for a broken heart!
And by thy soft Lethean power,
Inestimable flower!
Burst these terrestial bonds, and other regions try!

VERSES WRITTEN ON SEEING HER TWO SONS AT PLAY.

Sweet age of blest delusion! blooming boys,
Ah! revel long in childhood's thoughtless joys,
With light and pliant spirits, that can stoop
To follow sportively the rolling hoop:
To watch the sleeping top with gay delight,
Or mark with raptur'd gaze the sailing kite,
Or eagerly pursuing Pleasure's call,
Can find it centred in the bounding ball!
Alas! the day *will* come, when sports like these
Must lose their magic and their power to please;
Too swiftly fled, the rosy hours of youth
Shall yield their fairy charms to mournful Truth;
Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear
Sees the dark train of human ills appear;
Views various fortune for each lovely child,
Storms for the bold, and anguish for the mild;
Beholds already those expressive eyes
Beam a sad certainty of future sighs;
And dreads each suffering those dear breasts may know
In their long passage through a world of woe;

Perchance predestin'd every pang to prove,
That treacherous friends inflict, or faithless love;
For ah! how few have found existence sweet,
Where grief is sure, but happiness deceit!

The first of the two beautiful poems above quoted will be found in Charlotte Smith's *Desmond;* the last in the same writer's second Volume of Poems: but I have met with both of them frequently in books containing poetical selections. I am not aware that Lady O'Neil wrote any other verses.

MARY ROBINSON,

1758—1800,

Was a native of Bristol, where she was born, in 1758. Her father, whose name was Darby, was a merchant there. At the age of fifteen she married a young lawyer, Mr. Robinson, but the union was not a happy one. Profligacy and extravagance soon reduced his circumstances, and Mrs. Robinson, whose beauty and talents were remarkable, turned for subsistence to the stage. Her character suffered by her connection with the theatre; and she became, unfortunately, notorious for her gallantries. As an authoress, she displays very considerable powers, but, being one of the Della Cruscan school, she was mercilessly attacked by Gifford. She died in 1800.

I extract two of her poems.

I. SONNET.

High on a rock, coeval with the skies,
A temple stands, rear'd by immortal powers
To Chastity divine! ambrosial flowers
Twining round icicles, in columns rise,
Mingling with pendent gems of orient dyes!
Piercing the air, a golden crescent towers,
Veil'd by transparent clouds; while smiling hours
Shake from their varying wings celestial joys!

The steps of spotless marble, scatter'd o'er
With deathless roses, arm'd with many a thorn,
Lead to the altar. On the frozen floor,
Studded with tear-drops, petrified by scorn,
Pale vestals kneel, the goddess to adore,
While Love, his arrows broke, retires forlorn.

THE SNOW-DROP.

The Snow-drop, Winter's timid child,
Awakes to life, bedew'd with tears;
And flings around its fragrance mild,
And where no rival flow'rets bloom,
Amid the bare and chilling gloom,
A beauteous gem appears!

All weak and wan, with head inclin'd,
Its parent breast the drifted snow;
It trembles while the ruthless wind
Bends its slim form; the tempest lowers,
Its emerald eye drops crystal showers
On its cold bed below.

Poor flower! on thee the sunny beam
No touch of genial warmth bestows;
Except to thaw the icy stream
Whose little current purls along
Thy fair and glossy charms among,
And whelms thee as it flows.

The night breeze tears thy silky dress,
  Which deck'd with silvery lustre shone;
The morn returns, not thee to bless,
The gaudy crocus flaunts its pride,
And triumphs where its rival died,
  Unsheltered and unknown!

No sunny beam shall gild thy grave,
  No bird of pity thee deplore;
There shall no spreading branches wave,
For Spring shall all her gems unfold,
And revel mid her buds of gold,
  When thou art seen no more!

Where'er I find thee, gentle flower,
  Thou still art sweet and dear to me!
For I have known the cheerless hour,
Have seen the sunbeams cold and pale,
Have felt the chilling wintry gale,
  And wept and shrunk like thee!

MRS. HESTER CHAPONE.

1727—1801.

MRS. CHAPONE, well known for her admirable *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind,* was the daughter of Mr. Mulso, of Twywell, in Northamptonshire, and was born in 1727. She married in 1760, but her husband died within the first year of their union, leaving her in very straitened circumstances. Her first poetical work, a Volume of Miscellanies, appeared in 1775, and attracted much attention. It is to her prose writings, however, that she chiefly owes her fame. She died in 1801.

WRITTEN DURING A STORM AT MIDNIGHT, 1749.

In gloomy pomp whilst awful midnight reigns,
And wide o'er earth her mournful mantle spreads,
Whilst deep-voiced thunders threaten guilty heads,
And rushing torrents drown the frighted plains,
And quick-glanc'd lightnings to my dazzled sight
Betray the double horrors of the night;

A solemn stillness creeps upon my soul,
And all its powers in deep attention die;
My heart forgets to beat; my steadfast eye
Catches the flying gleam; the distant roll
Advancing gradual, swells upon my ear
With louder peals, more dreadful as more near.

Awake, my soul, from thy forgetful trance!
  The storm calls loud, and Meditation wakes;
  How at the sound pale Superstition shakes,
Whilst all her train of frantic Fears advance!
Children of Darkness, hence! fly far from me!
And dwell with Guilt and Infidelity!

But come, with look composed and sober pace,
  Calm Contemplation, come! and hither lead
  Devotion, that on earth disdains to tread;
Her inward flame illumes her glowing face,
Her upcast eye and spreading wings prepare
Her flight for Heaven, to find her treasure there.

She sees enraptured, through the thickest gloom,
  Celestial beauty beam, and midst the howl
  Of warring winds, sweet music charms her soul;
She sees, while rifted oaks in flame consume,
A Father-God, that o'er the storm presides,
Threatens, to save — and loves when most he chides!

ODE TO SOLITUDE.

Thou gentle nurse of pleasing woe,
To thee from crowds, and noise, and show,
  With eager haste I fly;

Thrice welcome, friendly Solitude,
O let no busy foot intrude,
Nor listening ear be nigh!

Soft, silent, melancholy maid,
With thee to yon sequester'd shade
My pensive steps I bend;
Still at the mild approach of night,
When Cynthia lends her sober light,
Do thou my walk attend!

To thee alone, my conscious heart
Its tender sorrow dares impart,
And ease my lab'ring breast;
To thee I trust the rising sigh
And bid the tear that swells my eye
No longer be suppress.

With thee among the haunted groves,
The lovely sorceress, Fancy, roves;
O let me find her here!
For she can time and space control,
And swift transport my fleeting soul
To all it holds most dear.

Ah! no—ye vain delusions, hence!
No more the hallow'd innocence
Of Solitude pervert!
Shall Fancy cheat the precious hour,
Sacred to Wisdom's awful power,
And calm Reflection's part?

O Wisdom! from the sea-beat shore,
Where, listening to the solemn roar,
  Thy lov'd Eliza* strays,
Vouchsafe to visit my retreat,
And teach my erring, trembling feet
  Thy heaven-protected ways!

O guide me to the humble cell
Where Resignation loves to dwell,
  Contentment's bower in view!
Nor pining grief with absence drear,
Nor sick suspense, nor anxious fear,
  Shall there my steps pursue.

There, let my soul to Him aspire,
Whom none e'er sought with vain desire,
  Nor lov'd in sad despair;
There, to his gracious will divine,
My dearest, fondest hope resign,
  And all my tenderest care.

Then peace shall heal this wounded breast,
That pants to see another blest,
  From selfish passion pure;
Peace, which when human wishes rise,
Intense, for aught beneath the skies,
  Can never be secure.

* Eliza Carter.

GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,

1757—1806,

WAS the daughter of John, Earl Spencer, and was born in 1757. "This beautiful woman, who shone a brilliant star in the fashionable world, cultivated and liberally patronised literature and the fine arts. Gibbon says, 'She was made for something better than a duchess.' The following poem has been translated into French by the Abbé De Lille." The duchess died in 1806.

THE PASSAGE OF THE MOUNT ST. GOTHARD.

To my Children.

Ye plains, where threefold harvests press the ground,
Ye climes, where genial gales incessant swell,
Where Art and Nature shed profusely round
Their rival wonders — Italy, farewell!

Still may thy year in fullest splendour shine!
Its icy darts in vain may Winter throw!
To thee a parent, sister, I consign,
And wing'd with health, I woo thy gales to blow.

Yet pleas'd Helvetia's rugged brows I see,
And through their craggy steeps delighted roam;
Pleas'd with a people, honest, brave, and free,
Whilst every step conducts me nearer home.

I wander where Tesino madly flows,
From cliff to cliff in foaming eddies tost;
On the rude mountain's barren breast he rose,
In Po's broad wave now hurries to be lost.

His shores neat huts and verdant pastures fill,
And hills where woods of pine the storm defy;
While, scorning vegetation, higher still
Rise the bare rocks, coeval with the sky.

Upon his banks a favour'd spot I found,
Where shade and beauty tempted to repose:
Within a grove, by mountains circled round,
By rocks o'erhung, my rustic seat I chose.

Advancing thence, by gentle pace and slow,
Unconscious of the way my footsteps prest,
Sudden, supported by the hills below,
St. Gothard's summits rose above the rest.

Midst towering cliffs, and tracts of endless cold,
The' industrious path pervades the rugged stone,
And seems — Helvetia! let thy toils be told —
A granite girdle o'er the mountain thrown.

No haunt of man the weary traveller greets,
No vegetation smiles upon the moor,
Save where the floweret breathes uncultur'd sweets,
Save where the patient monk receives the poor.

Yet let not these rude paths be coldly traced,
Let not these wilds with listless steps be trod;
Here fragrance scorns not to perfume the waste,
Here charity uplifts the mind to God.

His humble board the holy man prepares,
And simple food and wholesome lore bestows;
Extols the treasures that his mountain bears,
And paints the perils of impending snows.

For whilst bleak Winter numbs with chilling hand,
Where frequent crosses mark the traveller's fate,
In slow procession moves the merchant band,
And silent treads where tottering ruins wait.

Yet, midst those ridges, midst that drifted snow,
Can Nature deign her wonders to display;
Here Adularia shines with vivid glow,
And gems of crystal sparkle to the day.

Here, too, the hoary mountain's brow to grace,
Five silver lakes in tranquil state are seen;
While from their waters many a stream we trace,
That, scap'd from bondage, rolls the rocks between.

Hence flows the Reuss to seek her wedded love,
And, with the Rhine, Germanic climes explore;
Her stream I mark'd, and saw her wildly move
Down the bleak mountain, through her craggy shore.

My weary footsteps hop'd for rest in vain,
For steep on steep in rude confusion rose:
At length I paus'd above a fertile plain,
That promis'd shelter, and foretold repose.

Fair runs the streamlet o'er the pasture green,
Its margin gay, with flocks and cattle spread;
Embowering trees the peaceful village screen,
And guard from snow each dwelling's jutting shed.

Sweet vale! whose bosom wastes and cliffs surround,
Let me awhile thy friendly shelter share!
Emblem of life! where some bright hours are found
Amidst the darkest, dreariest years of care.

Delv'd through the rock, the secret passage bends;
And beauteous horror strikes the dazzled sight;
Beneath the pendent bridge the stream descends
Calm — till it tumbles o'er the frowning height.

We view the fearful pass — we wind along
The path that marks the terrors of our way —
Midst beetling rocks, and hanging woods among,
The torrent pours, and breathes its glittering spray.

Weary at length, serener scenes we hail —
More cultur'd groves o'ershade the grassy meads;
The neat though wooden hamlets deck the vale,
And Altorf's spires recall heroic deeds.

But though no more amidst those scenes I roam,
My fancy long each image shall retain —
The flock returning to its welcome home,
And the wild carol of the cow-herd's strain.

Lucernia's lake its glassy surface shows,
Whilst Nature's varied beauties deck its side;
Here rocks and woods its narrow waves enclose,
And there its spreading bosom opens wide.

And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild!
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm, that first preserv'd his child,
Then wing'd the arrow to the tyrant's heart.

Across the lake, and deep embower'd in wood,
Behold another hallow'd chapel stand,
Where three Swiss heroes lawless force withstood,
And stamp'd the freedom of their native land.

Their liberty required no rites uncouth,
No blood demanded, and no slaves enchained;
Her rule was gentle, and her voice was truth,
By social order form'd, by laws restrain'd.

We quit the lake — and cultivation's toil,
With Nature's charms combin'd, adorns the way;
And well-earn'd wealth improves the ready soil,
And simple manners still maintain their sway.

Farewell, Helvetia! from whose lofty breast
Proud Alps arise, and copious rivers flow;
Where, source of streams, eternal glaciers rest,
And peaceful Science gilds the plain below.

Oft on thy rocks the wondering eye shall gaze,
Thy valleys oft the raptur'd bosom seek —
There, Nature's hand her boldest work displays,
Here, bliss domestic beams on every cheek.

Hope of my life! dear children of my heart!
That anxious heart, to each fond feeling true,
To you still pants each pleasure to impart,
And more — O transport! — reach its home and you.

MISS ELIZABETH CARTER,

1717—1806,

ONE of the most learned of the British poetesses, was the daughter of Dr. Nicholas Carter of Deal, in Kent, where she was born in the year 1717. Her father appears to have taken the greatest possible pains with her education; and, although at first slow and inapt at study, she eventually became remarkably distinguished for her extensive and varied acquirements. She was well acquainted with the Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, and German languages; and, in later life, attained considerable knowledge of Portuguese and Arabic. Miss Carter acquired great celebrity by her translation of Epictetus, and was intimately acquainted with Dr. Johnson and the other chief literary characters of the day.

She never married. She had consented to an union with a gentleman whose name has not transpired; but she eventually refused him in consequence of his having written some verses which she did not approve! It is satisfactory to add, that the gentleman subsequently found a less squeamish partner.

Miss Carter died in London in 1806, being 89 years of age.

This lady's poetical writings display but little passion or imagination, and have none of those strong thoughts

and sublime ideas which betoken lofty genius: but her verses exhibit great classical purity, and are remarkable for an unusual sweetness of versification. They embody, too, a cheerful serenity very highly calculated to improve the moral tone of the reader's mind: for although Miss Carter translated Epictetus, she by no means followed his philosophy.

The following *Ode to Wisdom* (which originally appeared in Richardson's Clarissa), is a fair average sample of her powers.

ODE TO WISDOM.

The solitary bird of night
Through the thick shades now wings his flight,
  And quits this time-shook tower;
Where shelter'd from the blaze of day,
In philosophic gloom he lay,
  Beneath his ivy bower.

With joy I hear the solemn sound,
Which midnight echoes waft around,
  And sighing gales repeat:
Favourite of Pallas! I attend,
And faithful to thy summons, bend
  At Wisdom's awful seat.

She loves the cool, the silent eve,
Where no false shows of life deceive,
  Beneath the lunar ray.

Here Folly drops each vain disguise,
Nor sports her gaily-colour'd dyes,
As in the glare of day.

O Pallas! queen of ev'ry art,
That glads the sense and mends the heart,
Blest source of purer joys:
In ev'ry form of beauty bright,
That captivates the mental sight,
With pleasure and surprise:

To thy unspotted shrine I bow:
Attend thy modest suppliant's vow,
That breathes no wild desires:
But, taught by thy unerring rules,
To shun the fruitless wish of fools,
To nobler views aspires.

Not Fortune's gem, Ambition's plume,
Nor Cytheræa's fading bloom,
Be objects of my prayer:
Let Avarice, Vanity, and Pride,
Those envied, glittering toys, divide,
The dull rewards of care.

To me thy better gifts impart,
Each moral beauty of the heart,
By studious thoughts refined;
For Wealth, the smiles of glad content,
For Power, its amplest, best extent,
An empire o'er the mind.

When Fortune drops her gay parade,
When Pleasure's transient roses fade,
And wither in the tomb;
Unchang'd is thy immortal prize,
Thy ever-verdant laurels rise
In undecaying bloom.

By thee protected, I defy
The coxcomb's sneer, the stupid lie
Of ignorance and spite:
Alike contemn the leaden fool,
And all the pointed ridicule
Of undiscerning wit.

From envy, hurry, noise, and strife,
The dull impertinence of life,
In thy retreat I rest:
Pursue thee to the peaceful groves,
Where Plato's sacred spirit roves,
In all thy beauties drest.

He bade Ilissus' tuneful stream
Convey thy philosophic theme,
Of perfect fair and good:
Attentive Athens caught the sound,
And all her listening sons around
In awful silence stood:

Reclaim'd, her wild licentious youth
Confess'd the potent voice of truth,
And felt its just control:

The passions ceas'd their loud alarms,
And Virtue's soft persuasive charms
O'er all their senses stole.

Thy breath inspires the poet's song,
The patriot's free unbiass'd tongue,
The hero's generous strife:
Thine are retirement's silent joys,
And all the sweet engaging ties
Of still, domestic life.

No more to fabled names confined,
To thee, supreme, all perfect Mind,
My thoughts direct their flight;
Wisdom 's thy gift, and all her force
From Thee derived, eternal source
Of Intellectual light!

O send her sure, her steady ray,
To regulate my doubtful way,
Through life's perplexing road;
The mists of error to control,
And through its gloom direct my soul
To happiness and good!

Beneath her clear discerning eye,
The visionary shadows fly
Of folly's painted show:
She sees, through every fair disguise,
That all but Virtue's solid joys
Is vanity and woe.

LINES WRITTEN AT MIDNIGHT DURING A THUNDER-STORM.

Let coward Guilt, with pallid Fear,
To sheltering caverns fly,
And justly dread the vengeful fate
That thunders through the sky.

Protected by that Hand, whose law
The threatening storms obey,
Intrepid Virtue smiles secure
As in the blaze of day.

In the thick cloud's tremendous gloom
The lightnings lurid glare,
It views the same all gracious Power
That breathes the vernal air.

Through Nature's every varying scene,
By different ways pursued,
The one eternal end of Heaven
Is universal good.

With like beneficent effect
O'er flaming ether glows,
As when it tunes the linnet's voice,
Or blushes in the rose.

By reason taught to scorn those fears
That vulgar minds molest,
Let no fantastic terrors break
My dear Narcissus' rest.

Thy life may all the tenderest care
Of Providence defend;
And delegated angels round
Their guardian wings extend!

When through Creation's vast expanse
The last dread thunders roll,
Untune the concord of the spheres,
And shake the rising soul;

Unmov'd, may'st thou the final storm
Of jarring worlds survey,
That ushers in the glad serene
Of everlasting day!

ANN YEARSLEY,

1760—1806,

A NATIVE of Bristol, where she lived until maturity, in very humble circumstances. She was lifted from obscurity by Mrs. Hannah More, who published her poems; and prefaced them by a letter to Mrs. Montagu.

Mrs. Yearsley's poems, although often laboured and artificial, frequently display great force and felicity of expression; but they contain nothing striking in thought or sentiment.

FROM CLIFTON HILL.

Ye silent, solemn, strong, stupendous heights,
Whose terror-striking frown the schoolboy frights
From the young daw; whilst in your rugged breast
The chattering brood, secur'd by Horror, rest:
Say, Muse, what arm the lowering brothers cleft,
And the calm stream in this low cradle left?
Coeval with Creation they look down,
And, sunder'd, still retain their native frown.
Beneath those heights, lo! balmy springs arise,
To which pale Beauty's faded image flies;
Their kindly powers life's genial heat restore,
The tardy pulse, whose throbs were almost o'er,

Here beats a livelier tune. The breezy air,
To the wild hills invites the languid fair;
Fear not the western gale, thou timorous maid,
Nor dread its blast shall thy soft form invade;
Though cool and strong the quickening breezes blow,
And meet thy panting breath, 'twill quickly grow
More strong: then drink the odoriferous draught,
With unseen particles of health 'tis fraught.
Sit not within the threshold of Despair,
Nor plead a weakness fatal to the fair;
Soft term for Indolence, politely given,
By which we win no joy from earth or heaven.
Foul fiend! thou bane of health, fair virtue's bane,
Death of true pleasure, source of real pain!
Keen exercise shall brace the fainting soul,
And bid her slacken'd powers more vigorous roll.

* * * * *

How thickly cloth'd, yon rock of scanty soil,
Its lovely verdure scorns the hand of toil.
Here the deep green, and here the lively plays,
The russet beech, and ever blooming bays;
The vengeful black-thorn, of wild beauties proud,
Blooms beauteous in the gloomy chequer'd crowd:
The barren elm, the useful feeding oak,
Whose Hamadryad ne'er should feel the stroke
Of axe relentless, till twice fifty years
Have crown'd her woodland joys and fruitful cares.

The poisonous reptiles here their mischiefs bring,
And through the helpless sleeper dart the sting;
The toad envenom'd, hating human eyes,
Here springs to light, lives long, and aged dies.

The harmless snail, slow journeying, creeps away,
Sucks the young dew, but shuns the bolder day.
The long-nosed mouse, the woodland rat is here,
The sightless mole, with nicely pointed ear:
The timid rabbit hails the impervious gloom,
Eludes the dog's keen scent, and shuns her doom.

Various the tenants of this tangled wood,
Who skulk all day, all night review the flood,
Chew the wash'd weed driven by the beating wave,
Or feast on dreadful food, which hop'd a milder grave.

Hail, useful Channel! Commerce spreads her wings,
From either pole her various treasure brings;
Wafted by thee, the mariner, long stray'd,
Clasps the fond parent and the sighing maid;
Joy tunes the cry; the rocks rebound the roar:
The deep vibration quivers 'long the shore:
The merchant hears, and hails the peeping mast,
The wave-drench'd sailor scorns all peril past:
Now love and joy the noisy crew invite,
And clumsy music crowns the rough delight.

FROM A POEM ON MRS. MONTAGU.

Oft as I trod my native wilds alone,
Strong gusts of thought would rise, but rise to die;
The portals of the swelling soul ne'er oped
By liberal converse, rude ideas strove
Awhile for vent, but found it not, and died.

Thus rust the mind's best powers. Yon starry orbs,
Majestic ocean, flowery vales, gay groves,
Eye-wasting lawns, and heaven-attempting hills,
Which bound the horizon, and which curb the view;
All those, with beauteous imagery, awaked
My ravish'd soul to extacy untaught,
To all the transport the rapt sense can bear;
But all expired, for want of powers to speak;
All perish'd in the mind as soon as born,
Eras'd more quick than ciphers on the shore,
O'er which the cruel waves unheedful roll.

CAROLINE SYMONDS,

1792—1803,

THE most precocious of our female poets, was the daughter of the Rev. Charles Symonds, and was born in 1792. She died at the age of eleven years, and it may be safely said that none of our poetesses have exhibited any thing like the same genius at the same age.

I subjoin a variety of specimens.

THE HAREBELL.

In Spring's green lap there blooms a flower,
Whose cup imbibes each vernal shower;
That sips fresh nature's balmy dew,
Clad in her sweetest, purest blue;
Yet shuns the ruddy eye of morning,
The shaggy wood's brown shades adorning.
Simple flow'ret! child of May!
Though hid from the broad gaze of day,
Doom'd in the shade thy sweets to shed,
Unnotic'd droops thy languid head;
Still nature's darling thou'lt remain,
She feeds thee with her softest rain;
Fills each sweet bud with honied tears,
With genial gales thy bosom cheers.
Ah, then unfold thy simple charms,
In yon deep thicket's circling arms,

Far from the fierce and sultry glare,
No heedless hand shall harm thee there;
Still, then, avoid the gaudy scene,
The flaunting sun, th' embroider'd green,
And bloom, and fade, with chaste reserve, unseen.

THE FADED ROSE,

Which grew on the Tomb of Zelida.

I gaz'd on the rose-bud, I heav'd a deep sigh,
And mine eyelid was gemm'd with a tear;
O let me, I cried, by my Zelida lie,
For all that I value sleeps here!

Her sweetness, simplicity, virtue, and charms,
Could with naught but a seraph compare;
Ah! now since my Zelida's torn from my arms,
There is nothing I love, but despair.

This rose-tree once flourish'd, and sweeten'd the air,
Like its blossom, all lovely, she grew!
The scent of her breath, as its fragrance was rare,
And her cheeks were more fresh than its hue.

She planted, she lov'd it, she water'd its head,
And its bloom every rival defied;
But alas! what was beauty or virtue, soon fled,
In Spring they both blossom'd and died.

And now for my bosom this life has no charms,
I feel all its troubles and care;
And since my dear Zelida's torn from my arms,
There is nothing I love, but despair.

The subjoined lines display great delicacy of feeling, and exhibit a sweetness and simplicity of fancy, very remarkable in so young a writer.

SONNET.

To Lady Lucy Foley, on her birthday, February, 1803.

No morn now blushes on the enamour'd sight,
No genial sun now warms the torpid day;
Since February sternly check'd his ray,
When Lucy's eyes first beam'd their azure light.
What though no vernal flowers my hand invite
To crop their fragrance on your natal day;
Lucy, for you the snow-drop and the bay,
Shall blend the unfading green and modest white.
Though on this festive hour with aspect bleak,
Stern Winter frowns, in icy garments drest;
Still may the rosy Summer robe your cheek,
And the green Spring still bud within your breast;
Till the world fading on your closing eyes,
You find a golden Autumn in the skies.

The following sonnet, singularly applicable to herself, was made her Epitaph:

THE BLIGHTED ROSEBUD.

(Inscribed on the Writer's Tomb.)

Scarce had thy velvet lips imbib'd the dew,
And nature hail'd thee, infant queen of May;
Scarce saw thy opening bloom the sun's broad ray,
And on the air its tender fragrance threw;
When the north wind enamour'd of thee grew,
And from his chilling kiss, thy charms decay;
Now droops thine head, and fades thy blushing hue,
No more the queen of flowers, no longer gay.
So blooms a maid, her guardian's health and joy,
Her mind array'd in innocency's vest;
When suddenly, impatient to destroy,
Death clasps the victim to his iron breast:
She fades—the parent, sister, friend, deplore
The charms and budding virtues now no more.

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH,

1749—1806,

One of the most admired of our female poets, is also a noble specimen of womanly excellence. She was the daughter of Nicholas Turner, Esq., of Stoke House in Surrey, where she was born in 1749. Deprived of her mother at an early age, she was induced in her fifteenth year to marry Mr. Smith, the son of a rich merchant: the bridegroom's age being only twenty-one. Carelessness and extravagance on Mr. Smith's part, and the death of his father, whose will was so complicated that all the property was swallowed up in lawsuits, reduced the unhappy pair to great embarrassments. The husband was thrown into prison, which the wife shared with him: and it was while labouring under these difficulties that Mrs. Smith turned her literary talents to account. In 1782 she published a volume of Sonnets, which was favourably received by the public, and passed through no fewer than eleven editions. The domestic life of Mr. and Mrs. Smith becoming more and more unhappy, a separation at length took place; and Mrs. Smith retired to a cottage near Chichester, where she applied herself assiduously and cheerfully to literary pursuits. She here produced her well-known novels of *Emmeline*, *Ethelinde*, and *Celestina*, and various other works in prose and verse. She died at Tilford, near Farnham, in 1806.

Mrs. Smith's poetry is at once forcible and elegant: her descriptions of nature are peculiarly true and pleasing: and her sentiments, although somewhat sombre in their tone, are marked by great purity of thought, and clearness of expression. Her love of flowers is exquisitely developed.

SONNET.

Written at the close of Spring.

The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nurs'd in dew,
Anemonies, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has *Happiness* no second Spring?

SONNET.

Sighing, I see yon little troop at play,
By sorrow yet untouch'd, unhurt by care,
While free and sportive they enjoy to-day,
Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare.

O happy age! when Hope's unclouded ray
Lights their green path, and prompts their simple mirth,
Ere yet they feel the thorns that lurking lay
To wound the wretched pilgrims of the earth,
Making them rue the hour that gave them birth,
And threw them on a world so full of pain,
Where prosperous folly treads on patient worth,
And to deaf pride misfortune pleads in vain!
Ah! for their future fate how many fears
Oppress my heart, and fill mine eyes with tears!

SONNET.

The Glow-worm.

When, on some balmy-breathing night of Spring,
The happy child, to whom the world is new,
Pursues the evening moth of mealy wing,
Or from the heathbell beats the sparkling dew;
He sees before his inexperienc'd eyes
The brilliant Glow-worm, like a meteor, shine
On the turf bank; — amaz'd and pleas'd he cries,
"Star of the dewy grass, I make thee mine!"
Then, ere he sleep, collects the moisten'd flower,
And bids soft leaves his glittering prize enfold,
And dreams that fairy lamps illume his bower;
Yet with the morning shudders to behold
His lucid treasure, rayless as the dust: —
So turn the World's bright joys to cold and blank disgust.

SONNET.

To the Moon.

Queen of the silver bow! by thy pale beam
Alone and pensive, I delight to stray,
And watch thy shadow trembling in the stream,
Or mark the floating clouds that cross thy way.
And while I gaze, thy mild and placid light
Sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast;
And oft I think, fair planet of the night,
That in thy orb the wretched may have rest:
The sufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
Releas'd by death, to thy benignant sphere,
And the sad children of despair and woe
Forget in thee their cup of sorrow here.
Oh, that I soon may reach thy world serene,
Poor wearied pilgrim in this toiling scene!

SONNET.

On the Departure of the Nightingale.

Sweet poet of the woods, a long adieu!
Farewell, soft minstrel of the early year!
Ah! 'twill be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
And pour thy music on the night's dull ear.
Whether on Spring thy wandering flights await,
Or whether silent in our groves you dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
And still protect the song she loves so well.

With cautious step the love-lorn youth shall glide
  Through the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest;
And shepherd girls from eyes profane shall hide
  The gentle bird, who sings of pity best;
For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to sorrow, and to love!

SONNET.

Should the lone wanderer, fainting on his way,
  Rest for a moment of the sultry hours,
And, though his path through thorns and roughness lay,
  Pluck the wild rose, or woodbine's gadding flowers,
Weaving gay wreaths beneath some sheltering tree,
  The sense of sorrow he awhile may lose.
So have I sought thy flowers, fair Poesy!
  So charm'd my way with Friendship and the Muse.
But darker now grows life's unhappy day,
  Dark with new clouds of evil yet to come,
Her pencil sickening Fancy throws away,
  And weary Hope reclines upon the tomb,
And points my wishes to that tranquil shore,
Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.

ANNA SEWARD,

1747—1809,

THE daughter of the Reverend Thomas Seward, Canon Residentiary of Lichfield, was born in 1747. She early manifested a remarkable taste for poetry, and before she was nine years old, she could repeat the three first books of Paradise Lost. Her father, although himself a poet, endeavoured to repress her passion for the muse: but when she became of an age to choose her own studies, she devoted herself to poetical composition. In spite of a somewhat inflated and turgid style, Miss Seward gained a large share of public favour; we find that she was called "The Swan of Lichfield:" but she has few admirers in the present day. Sir Walter Scott, to whom she bequeathed three volumes of poetry for publication, pronounced her verses "execrable."

I subjoin some varied specimens of Miss Seward's powers.

SONNET.

December Morning, 1782.

I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn; and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Through misty windows bend my musing sight,

Where round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
With shutters clos'd, peer faintly through the gloom,
That slow recedes; while yon grey spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given. Then to decree
The grateful thoughts to God, ere they unfold
To Friendship or the Muse, or seek with glee
Wisdom's rich page: O hours! more worth than gold,
By whose blest use we lengthen life, and free
From drear decays of age, outlive the old!

TIME PAST.

Written, January, 1773.

Return, blest years! when not the jocund Spring,
Luxuriant Summer, nor the amber hours
Calm Autumn gives, my heart invok'd, to bring
Joys, whose rich balm o'er all the bosom pours;
When ne'er I wished might grace the closing day,
One tint purpureal, or one golden ray;
When the loud storms, that desolate the bowers,
Found dearer welcome than Favonian gales,
And Winter's bare, bleak fields, than Summer's flowery vales.

Yet not to deck pale hours with vain parade,
Beneath the blaze of wide-illumin'd dome;
Not for the bounding dance; not to pervade
And charm the sense with music; nor as roam
The mimic passions o'er theatric scene,
To laugh, or weep; O! not for these, I ween,

But for delights that made the heart their home,
Was the grey night-frost on the sounding plain
More than the sun invok'd, that gilds the grassy lane.

Yes, for the joys that trivial joys excel,
My lov'd Honora, did we hail the gloom
Of dim November's eve; and, as it fell,
And the bright fire shone cheerful round the room,
Dropt the warm curtains with no tardy hand,
And felt our spirits and our hearts expand;
Listening their steps, who still, where'er they come,
Make the keen stars, that glaze the settled snows,
More than the sun invok'd, when first he tints the rose.

Affection — Friendship — Sympathy,—your throne
Is Winter's glowing hearth;—and ye were ours,
Thy smile, Honora, made them all our own.
Where are they now? — alas! their choicest powers
Faded at thy retreat; — for thou art gone,
And many a dark, long eve I sigh alone,
In thrill'd remembrance of the vanish'd hours,
When storms were dearer than the balmy gales,
And the grey barren fields than green luxuriant vales.

SONG.

From thy waves, stormy Lannow, I fly;
From the rocks that are lash'd by their tide;
From the maid whose cold bosom, relentless as they,
Has wreck'd my warm hopes by her pride!

Yet lonely and rude as the scene,
Her smile to that scene could impart
A charm that might rival the bloom of the vale —
But away, thou fond dream of my heart!
From thy rocks, stormy Lannow, I fly!

Now the blasts of the winter come on,
And the waters grow dark as they rise!
But 'tis well! — they resemble the sullen disdain
That has lour'd in those insolent eyes.
Sincere were the sighs they represt,
But they rose in the days that are flown!
Ah, nymph! unrelenting and cold as thou art,
My spirit is proud as thine own!
From thy rocks, stormy Lannow, I fly!

Lo! the wings of the sea-fowl are spread
To escape the loud storm by their flight;
And these caves will afford them a gloomy retreat
From the winds and the billows of night:
Like them, to the home of my youth,
Like them, to its shades I retire;
Receive me, and shield my vext spirit, ye groves,
From the pangs of insulted desire!
To thy rocks, stormy Lannow, adieu!

THE GRAVE OF YOUTH.

When life is hurried to untimely close,
In the years of crystal eyes and burnish'd hair,

Dire are the thoughts of death; eternal parting
From all the precious soul's yet known delights,
All she had clung to here; from youth and hope,
And the year's blossom'd April; bounding strength,
Which had outleap'd the roes, when morning suns
Yellow'd their forest glade; from reaper's shout
And cheerful swarm of populous towns; from Time,
Which tells of joys forepast, and promises
The dear return of seasons, and the bliss
Crowning a fruitful marriage; from the stores
Of well-engrafted knowledge; from all utterance,
Since in the silent grave, no talk! no music!
No gay surprise, by unexpected good,
Social, or individual! — no glad step
Of welcome friend, with more intenseness listen'd
Than warbled melody! no father's counsel!
No mother's smile! no lover's whisper'd vow!
There nothing breathes save the insatiate worm,
And nothing is, but the drear altering corse,
Resolving silently to shapeless dust,
In unpierc'd darkness and in black oblivion.

MISS SCOTT (OF ANCRAM).

IN the third volume of Ellis's *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, are two poems by Miss Scott, of Ancram. The following is one of them.

THE OWL.

While the Moon, with sudden gleam,
Through the clouds that cover her,
Darts her light upon the stream,
And the poplars gently stir,
Pleas'd I hear thy boding cry!
Owl, that lov'st the cloudy sky,
Sure, thy notes are harmony!

While the maiden, pale with care,
Wanders to the lonely shade,
Sighs her sorrows to the air,
While the flowerets round her fade,
Shrinks to hear thy boding cry!
Owl, that lov'st the cloudy sky,
To her it is not harmony!

While the wretch, with mournful dole,
Wrings his hands in agony,
Praying for his brother's soul,
Whom he piercëd suddenly,
Shrinks to hear thy boding cry,
Owl that lov'st the cloudy sky,
To him it is not harmony.

MRS. MARY TIGHE,

1773—1810.

THIS highly gifted lady was the daughter of the Rev. William Blachford, of the county of Wicklow, where she was born in or about the year 1773. She is chiefly known by her splendid poem of *Psyche*, which, for gorgeousness of colouring and refinement of imagination, is scarcely behind the best verses of Moore, while it is certainly more chaste and spiritual in its sentiment. Mrs. Tighe died in 1810.

FROM PSYCHE.

(Canto II.)

Psyche's return to the Palace of Love — Her disobedience.— Love asleep. — Psyche's amazement.— The flight of Love.— Sudden banishment of Psyche from the Island of Pleasure.

Illumin'd bright now shines the splendid dome,
Melodious accents her arrival hail:
But not the torch's blaze can chase the gloom,
And all the soothing powers of music fail;
Trembling she seeks her couch with horror pale,
But first a lamp conceals in secret shade,
While unknown terrors all her soul assail.
Thus half their treacherous counsel is obey'd,
For still her gentle soul abhors the murderous blade.

And now, with softest whispers of delight,
Love welcomes Psyche still more fondly dear;
Not unobserv'd, though hid in deepest night,
The silent anguish of her secret fear.
He thinks that tenderness excites the tear
By the late image of her parent's grief,
And half-offended seeks in vain to cheer:
Yet while he speaks, her sorrows feel relief,
Too soon more keen to sting from this suspension brief!

Allow'd to settle on celestial eyes,
Soft Sleep exulting now exerts his sway,
From Psyche's anxious pillow gladly flies
To veil those orbs, whose fierce and lambent ray
The powers of heaven submissively obey.
Trembling and breathless then she softly rose,
And seiz'd the lamp, where it obscurely lay,
With hand too rashly daring to disclose
The sacred veil which hung mysterious o'er her woes.

Twice, as with agitated step she went,
The lamp expiring shone with doubtful gleam,
As though it warn'd her from her rash intent:
And twice she paus'd, and on its trembling beam
Gaz'd with suspended breath, while voices seem
With murmuring sound along the roof to sigh;
As one just waking from a troublous dream,
With palpitating heart and straining eye,
Still fix'd with fear remains, still thinks the danger nigh.

O daring Muse! wilt thou indeed essay
To paint the wonders which that lamp could shew?

And canst thou hope in living words to say
The dazzling glories of that heavenly view?
Ah! well I ween, that if with pencil true
That splendid vision could be well exprest,
The fearful awe imprudent Psyche knew
Would seize with rapture every wondering breast,
When Love's all-potent charms divinely stood confest.

All imperceptible to human touch,
His wings display celestial essence light,
The clear effulgence of the blaze is such,
The brilliant plumage shines so heavenly bright,
That mortal eyes turn dazzled from the sight:
A youth he seems in manhood's freshest years;
Round his fair neck, as clinging with delight,
Each golden curl resplendently appears,
Or shades his darker brow, which grace majestic wears:

Or o'er his guileless front the ringlets bright
Their rays of sunny lustre seem to throw,
That front than polish'd ivory more white!
His blooming cheeks with deeper blushes glow
Than roses scatter'd o'er a bed of snow:
While on his lips, distill'd in balmy dews,
(Those lips divine, that even in silence know
The heart to touch,) persuasion to infuse,
Still hangs a rosy charm that never vainly sues.

The friendly curtain of indulgent sleep,
Disclos'd not yet his eyes' resistless sway,
But from their silky veil there seemed to peep
Some brilliant glances with a soften'd ray,

Which o'er his features exquisitely play,
And all his polish'd limbs suffuse with light.
Thus through some narrow space the azure day
Sudden its cheerful rays diffusing bright,
Wide darts its lucid beams, to gild the brow of night.

His fatal arrows, and celestial bow
Beside the couch were negligently thrown,
Nor needs the god his dazzling arms to show
His glorious birth, such beauty round him shone
As sure could spring from Beauty's self alone;
The gloom which glow'd o'er all of soft desire
Could well proclaim him Beauty's cherish'd son:
And Beauty's self will oft these charms admire,
And steal his witching smile, his glance's living fire.

Speechless with awe, in transport strangely lost,
Long Psyche stood with fix'd adoring eye:
Her limbs immovable, her senses tost
Between amazement, fear and ecstasy,
She hangs enamour'd o'er the deity.
Till from her trembling hand extinguish'd falls
The fatal lamp — he starts — and suddenly
Tremendous thunders echo through the halls,
While ruin's hideous crash bursts o'er the affrighted walls.

Dread horror seizes on her sinking heart,
A mortal chillness shudders at her breast,
Her soul sinks fainting from death's icy dart,
The groan scarce utter'd dies but half exprest,
And down she sinks in deadly swoon opprest:

But when at length awaking from her trance,
The terrors of her fate stand all confest,
In vain she casts around her timid glance,
The rudely frowning scenes her former joys enhance.

No traces of those joys, alas, remain!
A desert solitude alone appears:
No verdant shade relieves the sandy plain,
The wide-spread waste no gentle fountain cheers,
One barren face the dreary prospect wears;
Nought through the vast horizon meets her eye
To calm the dismal tumult of her fears,
No trace of human habitation nigh,
A sandy wild beneath, above a threatening sky.

Beautiful, however, as is this poem of *Psyche*, I am not sure that Mrs. Tighe is not more successful when she is less ambitious. The following verses give a good specimen of her more simple style: —

THE LILY.

How wither'd, perish'd, seems the form
Of yon obscure unsightly root!
Yet from the blight of wintry storm,
It hides secure the precious fruit.

The careless eye can find no grace,
No beauty in the scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
What latent loveliness it holds.

Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
The lily wraps her silver vest,
Till vernal suns and vernal gales
Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.

Yes, hide beneath the mouldering heap
The undelighting slighted thing;
There in the cold earth buried deep,
In silence let it wait the Spring.

Oh! many a stormy night shall close
In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still in undisturb'd repose,
Uninjur'd lies the future birth;

And Ignorance, with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view;
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of hope, delicious tear,
The sun, the shower indeed shall come;
The promis'd verdant shoot appear,
And nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, O virgin Queen of Spring!
Shalt from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
Unveil thy charms, and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white,
Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals' flowery light
In the mild breeze unfetter'd wave.

So Faith shall seek the lowly dust,
Where humble Sorrow loves to lie,
And bid her thus her hopes entrust,
And watch with patient cheerful eye;

And bear the long, cold, wintry night,
And bear her own degraded doom,
And wait till Heaven's reviving light,
Eternal Spring! shall burst the gloom.

MISSES MARIA AND HARRIET FALCONAR.

1788.

THESE two ladies are remarkable specimens of precocious genius. Maria Falconar was but seventeen years of age, and Harriet but fourteen, when (in 1788) they gave to the world their *Poems on Slavery*. The works are very pleasing and characteristic specimens of female talent, and are written with a strength of moral tone which is surprising in such youthful minds.

FROM MARIA FALCONAR'S POEM.

Once Superstition, in a fatal hour,
O'er Europe rais'd the sceptre of her power;
She reign'd triumphant minister of death,
And Peace and Pleasure faded in her breath;
Deep in monastic solitude entomb'd,
The bud of beauty wither'd ere it bloom'd;
The brilliant eye where love had sought to dwell,
Shed all its lustre o'er the cloister'd cell;
The smiling lip, of bright vermillion dye,
Grew pale, and quiver'd with the passing sigh;
The music floating from each tuneful tongue,
With midnight hymns the Gothic arches ring.
Here, through Reflection's eye, the pensive mind
Sought with regret for objects far behind;

And fond Remembrance, as she heav'd a sigh,
Drew back the soul just soaring to the sky;
Save where misguided zeal in peace withdrew,
From each bright pleasure, each enchanting view.
The still retreat pale Melancholy sought,
And found each object suited to her thought;
Soft Sensibility might here deplore,
And feel the shaft of falsehood wound no more;
The sport of fortune, long to comfort lost,
With hope far banish'd, expectation cross'd;
Explor'd these scenes to weep for anguish past,
Where the swell'd throbbing heart has burst at last.
The Eternal from the throne of grace survey'd,
With eye averse, the sacrifice they made;
No forc'd devotion found acceptance there,
No grateful incense issu'd from her prayer.
Thus Superstition could not fix her sway
In heaven, but look'd on earth to seize her prey;
And yet, unsated with domestic pain,
Sought to extend the terrors of her reign.
She saw, as on the fatal height she stood,
Her impious altars drench'd in guiltless blood;
Where Fortitude with candid virtue join'd,
And sought by sacred truths to save mankind;
There she bestow'd her persecutions dire,
And close pursu'd with unrelenting ire;
Nor ceas'd to scourge them with her vengeful rod,
Till each, a martyr saint, embrac'd his god.

The younger of the two sisters displays, I think, the superior genius. Her feeling is stronger; her declama-

tion more warm and eloquent. The following is an extraordinary passage for a girl of fourteen: —

The British youth, torn from his much lov'd home,
O'er foreign seas and foreign coasts to roam,
Amid the fury of the piercing blast,
The swell'd wave circling round the shiver'd mast,
While bursting peals of thunder rend the skies,
And o'er the deck, the foaming billows rise,
Awhile in terror views the lightning glare
With streaming horror, through the midnight air:
— The storm once past, he gains the friendly ray
Of Hope, to guide him through the dangerous way;
Smiling, she bids each future prospect rise,
Through Fancy's varied mirror, to his eyes.
Not so the slave: oppress'd with secret care,
He sinks the hapless victim of despair;
Or doom'd to torments that might even move
The steely heart, and melt it into love;
Till, worn with anguish, withering in his bloom,
He falls, an early tenant of the tomb!

Shall Britain view, unmov'd, sad Afric's shore
Delug'd so oft in streams of purple gore!
Britain, where science, peace, and plenty smile,
Virtue's bright seat, and freedom's favour'd isle!
Rich are her plains and fruitful is her clime,
The scourge of tyrants, and the boast of time;
Of every virtue, every worth possest,
That fires the hero's or the patriot's breast:
There, nobly warm'd with animating fire,
Our Shakspere struck his soul-commanding lyre;

There scenes of bliss immortal Milton sung,
And notes harmonious issued from his tongue:
And bards like these shall boast in every age,
While native genius glows in Hayley's page;
While genius bids, to our enchanted eyes,
In Swift's own strains, a second Pope arise.
When Truth, perplex'd in error's thorny maze,
Threw o'er the world obscur'd and darken'd rays,
Then Newton rose, unveil'd the beauteous maid:
He spoke, and nature stood at once display'd.
These were the souls that Britain once possess'd,
When genuine virtue fir'd the patriot's breast;
And still shall she protect fair freedom's cause,
And vindicate her violated laws;
Waft peace and freedom to a wretched land,
And scatter blessings with a liberal hand.

ELIZABETH TREFUSIS,

1808,

SISTER of the late Lord Clinton, published in 1808 two volumes of *Poems and Tales*, from which the following verses are extracted.

THE BOY AND BUTTERFLY.

Proud of its little day, enjoying
The lavish sweets kind nature yields,
In harmless sports each hour employing,
Ranging the gardens, woods, and fields,
A lovely butterfly extending
Its grateful wing to Sol's warm beams,
No dreaded danger saw impending,
But bask'd secure, in peaceful dreams.
A wandering urchin view'd this treasure
Of gaudy colours fine and gay;
Thoughtless, consulting but his pleasure,
He chas'd it through the livelong day.
At last the young but sly dissembler
Appear'd to follow other flies,
Then turning, seiz'd the little trembler,
Who, crush'd beneath his fingers, dies!
Surpris'd, he sees the hasty ruin
His reckless cruelty had wrought;
The victim (which, so long pursuing,
Scarce raised a wish or claimed a thought,)

Now bids the tears of genuine sorrow
O'er his repentant bosom flow!
Yet—he'll forget it ere the morrow,
And deal to others equal woe!—
Thus the vain man, with subtle feigning,
Pursues, o'ertakes poor woman's heart;
But soon his hapless prize disdaining,
She dies!—the victim of his art.

In a novel which the authoress destroyed, occurs the Poem now about to be quoted; the following is the explanation which Miss Trefusis prefixes to the verses:—

[At the death of her child, and fifteen months after her marriage with Edmond, the unfortunate Eudora discovers that he is still tenderly attached to her rival Enna, and that she is herself the only obstacle to their happiness. Full of love and grief, she determines to remove that obstacle by suicide.]

EUDORA'S LAMENTATION OVER HER DEAD CHILD.

I.

Make it wide, make it deep, and with moss be it lin'd,
His delicate limbs no rude pebbles shall wound;
My babe with its mother in death shall be join'd!
Then the lord of my wishes, no longer unkind,
May shed a fond tear on the grief-hallow'd ground.
Lay it close by my side,
Lay it close by my side,
'T is the child of my Edmond! and I—was his bride.

II.

Who says that I murder'd the peace of my love,
That his heart was another's, his hand only mine?
Hush, hush! 't is not true!—her affection to prove,
His Eudora each obstacle soon will remove;
Content for his sake every bliss to resign.
With my babe on my breast,
With my babe on my breast,
My heart's lord shall be happy! and I—be at rest!

III.

Then if, hand lock'd in hand, o'er my grave they should stray,
And vanity smile o'er the ruins of love,
Yet let justice and pity instruct them to say,
"She merited better, but fate had its way:
And now her pure spirit is soaring above!
With her babe on her breast,
With her babe on her breast,
Now earth shrinks from her view, and the mourner's at rest."

MISS JANE ELLIOT,

SISTER to Sir Gilbert Elliot, of Minto, was the author of the much-admired ballad which is subjoined: "in which," says Sir Walter Scott, in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, "the manner of the ancient minstrels is so happily imitated, that it required the most positive evidence to convince me that the song was of modern date."

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I've heard the lilting at our yowe-milking,
Lasses a' lilting before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning —
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At buchts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
The lasses are lonely and dowie and wae;
Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglen and hies her away.

In hairst, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters are lyart, and runkled, and gray;
At fair, or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching —
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, at the gloaming, nae swankies are roaming,
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play,
But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie —
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dule and wae for the order, sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that foucht aye the foremost,
The prime o' our land, are cauld in the clay.

We hear nae mair lilting at our yowe-milking,
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

MRS. ALICIA COCKBURN.

1794.

ALICIA RUTHERFORD of Fernilie, North Britain, who became the wife of Mr. Patrick Cockburn, advocate, belonging to the Scotch bar, was the author of the following ballad, called *The Flowers of the Forest — Part Second.* I am not aware what else she wrote. She died in Edinburgh, in 1794.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I've seen the smiling
Of Fortune beguiling;
I've felt all its favours, and found its decay:
Sweet was its blessing,
Kind its caressing;
But now it is fled — it is fled far away.

I've seen the Forest
Adornëd the foremost
With flowers of the fairest most pleasant and gay;
Sae bonnie was their blooming!
Their scent the air perfuming!
But now they are wither'd and weded away.

I've seen the morning
With gold the hills adorning,
And loud tempest storming before the mid-day.

I've seen Tweed's silver streams
Shining in the sunny beams,
Grow drumly and dark as he rowed on his way.

Oh, fickle Fortune,
Why this cruel sporting?
Oh, why still perplex us, poor sons of a day?
Nae mair your smiles can cheer me,
Nae mair your frowns can fear me;
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

It is generally understood that this pleasing ballad refers to the battle of Flodden Field. Another copy of verses on this subject was written by Miss Jane Elliot, sister to Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, whose composition will be found at page 207.

HANNAH COWLEY,

1743—1809,

Was born at Tiverton, in Devonshire, in the year 1743. She was the daughter of Mr. Philip Parkhouse, a bookseller of eminence in that town; and, being well instructed, gave early signs of genius. She is chiefly known as the author of some very clever plays, among which is the extremely amusing and effective comedy of *The Belle's Stratagem*. She wrote, however, some miscellaneous poems which met with very considerable success at the time of their publication, and are even yet much esteemed. Amongst them may be named *The Maid of Arragon*, a poem in blank verse; *The Siege of Acre*; and *Edwina, the Huntress*. She was married in 1768 to Mr. Cowley, an officer in the service of the East India Company, between whom and herself the warmest attachment ever subsisted. She died in 1809.

The following poem will give a good idea of her powers: —

ON THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

Ill-fated Chatterton! for thee I raise
A mingled lay of censure and of praise!
Bright star of Genius! torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!

Ye Muses ! who around his natal bed
Bestowed your gifts, and all your influence shed ;
Apollo ! that didst fire his infant breast,
And in his genuine numbers shine confest,
Ah, why on him such sensate nerves bestow
To heighten torture to the child of woe !

Thou haggard Poverty ! whose cheerless eye
Makes note of Rapture change to deepest sigh,
Subdued by thee his pen no more obeys,
No more revives the song of ancient days,
Check'd in his flight, his lofty genius cowers,
Locks her faint wings, and yields to thee her powers !

Behold him, Muses ! see your favourite son,
The prey of want ere manhood is begun ;
The heart which you inspired by anguish torn,
The mind you cherish'd, drooping and forlorn !
See now ! Despair her sable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends !
Ah, see ! a deadly bowl, till now conceal'd,
Before his eyes is gradually reveal'd ;
Some spirit seize it ! seize the liquid snare,
Cast it to earth, or dissipate in air —
Stay, hapless youth ! refrain, abhor the draught,
With racking pangs, with deep Repentance fraught !
Oh, hold ! the cup with WOE ETERNAL flows,
More, more than Death ! the poisonous juice bestows.

In vain ! — he drinks ! — see how the scorching fires
Rush through his veins ! see, writhing, he expires !

No sorrowing friend, no sister, parent nigh,
To soothe his pangs, or catch his parting sigh,
Alone, unknown, the Muses' favourite dies,
And with the vulgar dead, unnoted lies!

Bright star of Genius! torn from Life and Fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!

ISABELLA, COUNTESS OF CARLISLE,

1795,

WAS the author of the following lines. She died in 1795.

THE FAIRY'S ANSWER.

*To Mrs. Greville's Prayer for Indifference.**

Without preamble, to my friend
These hasty lines I 'm bid to send,
  Or give, if I am able :
I dare not hesitate to say,
Though I have trembled all the day —
  It looks so like a fable.

Last night's adventure is my theme ;
And should it strike you as a dream,
  Yet soon its high import
Must make you own the matter such,
So delicate, it were too much
  To be composed in sport.

The moon did shine serenely bright,
And every star did deck the night,
  While zephyr fann'd the trees ;
No more assail'd my mind's repose,
Save that yon stream, which murmuring flows,
  Did echo to the breeze.

* Vide p. 145.

Enwrapt in solemn thoughts I sate,
Revolving o'er the turns of fate,
Yet void of hope or fear;
When lo! behold an airy throng,
With lightest steps and jocund song,
Surprised my eye and ear.

A form superior to the rest
His little voice to me address'd,
And gently thus began:
"I've heard strange things from one of you,
"Pray tell me if you think 'tis true;
"Explain it, if you can.

"Such incense has perfum'd my throne!
"Such eloquence my heart has won!
"I think I guess the hand:
"I know her wit and beauty too,
"But why she sends a prayer so new,
"I cannot understand.

"To light some flames, and some revive,
"To keep some other just alive,
"Full oft I am implor'd;
"But with peculiar power to please,
"To supplicate for nought but ease!
'Tis odd, upon my word!

"Tell her, with fruitless care I've sought:
"And though my realms, with wonders fraught,
"In remedies abound,
"No grain of cold Indifference
"Was ever yet allied to sense
"In all my fairy round.

" The regions of the sky I 'd trace,
" I 'd ransack every earthly place,
" Each leaf, each herb, each flower,
" To mitigate the pangs of fear,
" Dispel the clouds of black despair,
" Or lull the restless hour.

" I would be generous as I'm just;
" But I obey, as others must,
" Those laws which fate has made.
" My tiny kingdom how defend,
" And what might be the horrid end,
" Should man my state invade?

" 'T would put your mind into a rage,
" And such unequal war to wage,
" Suits not my royal duty!
" I dare not change a first decree;
" She's doom'd to please, nor can be free,
" Such is the lot of Beauty!"

This said, he darted o'er the plain,
And after follow'd all his train;
No glimpse of him I find:
But sure I am, the little sprite
These words, before he took his flight,
Imprinted on my mind.

MRS. LEICESTER.

About 1800.

Of this lady I know no more than this: — that I occasionally meet with her name attached to little lively productions like the following. The female muse seems particularly happy in the invention of stories to illustrate a sentiment or to point a moral: and the subjoined lines appear to me to be a good specimen of this facility.

THE MOCK HERO.

Horatio, of ideal courage vain,
Was flourishing in air his father's cane:
And as the fumes of valour swell'd his pate,
Now thought himself this hero, and now that:
"And now," he cried, "I will Achilles be;
My sword I'll brandish; — mark! — the Trojans flee!
Now I'll be Hector, when his angry blade
A lane through heaps of slaughter'd Grecians made!
And now my deeds still braver, I'll evince,
I am no less than — Edward the Black Prince!
Give way, ye coward French!" ——
As thus he spoke
And aim'd in fancy a sufficient stroke
To fix the fate of Cressy or Poictiers,
Heroically spurning trivial fears,

His milk-white hand he strikes against a nail,
Sees his own blood, and feels his courage fail;
Ah, where is now that boasted valour flown,
That in the tented field so late was shown?
Achilles weeps, great Hector hangs his head,
And the Black Prince goes whimpering to bed!

MRS. HANNAH MORE.

1745—1833.

THIS excellent and accomplished lady was a daughter of Jacob More, a village schoolmaster, at Stapleton, in Gloucestershire, where she was born in the year 1745. Her literary talents were developed early, for in her seventeenth year she published a Pastoral Drama, called *The Search after Happiness*, and for nearly seventy years she continued to write in various shapes for the public. She died in 1833.

Mrs. More's chief poetical productions are her Tragedies of *The Inflexible Captive*, *Percy*, and *The Fatal Falsehood*: her *Sacred Dramas*: *Florio*: *The Bas Bleu*: *Sensibility*: and *Sir Eldred of the Bower*. Dr. Johnson considered Hannah More the best of the female versifiers of her day; but the memory of her poetic fame cannot be said to have survived her. She is now generally considered to have been a melodious and sensible versifier, but not possessed of much true poetic fire.

For myself, I venture to think that Hannah More has scarcely received her merited share of fame as a poet. For, notwithstanding her didactic style, and somewhat mechanical mode of thought, I think I can often detect in her writings the real poetry of inspi-

ration. Here are two little proverbs which show, I think, a genuine poetic wit.

> "In men this blunder still you find,
> All think their little set, mankind."—
>
> "Small habits well pursued betimes,
> May reach the dignity of crimes."

There is something more than measured prose, too, in the following extract from *Sensibility:*

> Since trifles make the sum of human things,
> And half our misery from our foibles springs;
> Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
> And though but few can serve, yet all may please;
> O let the ungentle spirit learn from hence,
> A small unkindness is a great offence.
> To spread large bounties, though we wish in vain,
> Yet all may shun the guilt of giving pain.
> To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
> With rank to grace them, or to crown with health,
> Our little lot denies; yet liberal still,
> God gives its counterpoise to every ill;
> Nor let us murmur at our stinted powers,
> When kindness, love, and concord may be ours.
> The gift of minist'ring to others' ease,
> To all her sons impartial Heaven decrees;
> The gentle offices of patient love,
> Beyond all flattery, and all price above;
> The mild forbearance at a brother's fault,
> The angry word suppress'd, the taunting thought:

Subduing and subdued the petty strife,
Which clouds the colour of domestic life;
The sober comfort, all the peace which springs
From the large aggregate of little things;
On these small cares of daughter, wife, and friend,
The almost sacred joys of *Home* depend:
There, Sensibility, thou best may'st reign,
Home is thy true legitimate domain.

A good characteristic specimen of Hannah More's lively, good humoured, moralising style of verse, is contained in her story called

THE TWO WEAVERS.

As at their work two weavers sat,
Beguiling time with friendly chat,
They touch'd upon the price of meat,
So high a weaver scarce could eat.

...

What with my babes and sickly wife,
Quoth Dick, I 'm almost tir'd of life;
So hard we work, so poor we fare,
'Tis more than mortal man can bear.

How glorious is the rich man's state,
His house so fine, his wealth so great;
Heaven is unjust, you must agree,
Why all to him, and none to me?

In spite of what the Scripture teaches,
In spite of all the pulpit preaches,

The world, indeed I 've thought so long,
Is rul'd, methinks, extremely wrong.

Where'er I look, howe'er I range,
'T is all confus'd, and hard, and strange;
The good are troubled and opprest,
And all the wicked are the blest.

Quoth John, our ignorance is the cause
Why thus we blame our Maker's laws;
Parts of his ways alone we know,
'T is all that man can see below.

Seest thou that carpet, not half done,
Which thou, dear Dick, hast well begun?
Behold the wild confusion there!
So rude the mass, it makes one stare.

A stranger, ignorant of the trade,
Would say no meaning 's there convey'd;
For where 's the middle, where 's the border?
The carpet now is all disorder.

Quoth Dick, my work is yet in bits,
But still in every part it fits;
Besides, you reason like a lout,
Why man, that carpet 's inside out!

Says John,—Thou says't the thing I mean,
And now I hope to cure thy spleen:
This world, which clouds thy soul with doubt,
Is but a carpet inside out.

As when we view these shreds and ends,
We know not what the whole intends;
So when on earth things look but odd,
They 're working still some scheme of God.

No plan, no pattern can we trace,
All wants proportion, truth, and grace;
The motley mixture we deride,
Nor see the beauteous upper side.

But when we reach the world of light,
And view these works of God aright;
Then shall we see the whole design,
And own the workman is divine.

What now seem random strokes will there
All order and design appear;
Then shall we praise what here we spurn'd,
For then, the carpet will be turn'd.

...

Thou 'rt right, quoth Dick, no more I'll grumble
That this world is so strange a jumble;
My impious doubts are put to flight,
For my own carpet sets me right.

As a sample of Mrs. More's dramatic poetry, I select the following passage from *Daniel*, one of her *Sacred Dramas*. It is the speech of Daniel on being condemned to death:

And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it?
To die! why 't is to triumph: 't is to join

The great assembly of the good and just:
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!
Oh, 't is to join the band of holy men,
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'T is to meet
My great progenitors; 't is to behold
The illustrious patriarchs: they with whom the Lord
Deign'd hold familiar converse! 'Tis to see
Bless'd Noah and his children: once a world.
'T is to behold (O rapture to conceive!)
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost below:
Behold Azariah and the band of brothers
Who sought in bloom of youth the scorching flames!
Nor shall we see heroic men alone,
Champions who fought the fight of faith on earth;
But heavenly conquerors, angelic hosts,
Michael and his bright legions who subdued
The foes of Truth! To join their blest employ
Of love and praise! To the high melodies
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,
Accordant to the golden harps of saints!
To join in blest hosannahs to their king!
Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,
Alone were heaven, though saint or seraph none
Should meet our sight, and only God were there!
This is to die! Who would not die for this?
Who would not die that he might live for ever?

There is a well expressed truth in the following: —

PASSION THE SOURCE OF MISERY.

Yet Heaven's decrees are just and wise,
And man is born to bear;

Joy is the portion of the skies,
Beneath them all is care.

Yet blame not Heav'n; 't is erring man
Who mars his own best joys;
Whose passion uncontroll'd the plan
Of promis'd bliss destroys.

The deadliest wounds with which we bleed,
Our crimes inflict alone:
Man's mercies from God's hand proceed,
His miseries from his own.

MISS HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS,

1780—1823,

WAS the author, amongst other verses, of some of the most musical and expressive sonnets in our language. The first of these here printed is a great favourite of Wordsworth's.

SONNET TO HOPE.

O ever skill'd to wear the form we love!
To bid the shapes of fear and grief depart;
Come, gentle Hope! with one gay smile remove
The lasting sadness of an aching heart.
Thy voice, benign enchantress! let me hear;
Say that for me some pleasures yet shall bloom,
That Fancy's radiance, Friendship's precious tear,
Shall soften, or shall chase, misfortune's gloom.
But come not glowing in the dazzling ray,
Which once with dear illusions charm'd the eye;
O! strew no more, sweet flatterer! on my way
The flowers I fondly thought too bright to die;
Visions less fair will soothe my pensive breast,
That asks not happiness, but longs for rest!

PARAPHRASE.

Psalm LXXIV. 16, 17.

My God! all nature owns thy sway,
Thou giv'st the night and thou the day!

When all thy lov'd creation wakes,
When morning, rich in lustre, breaks,
And bathes in dew the opening flower,
To Thee we owe her fragrant hour;
And when she pours her choral song,
Her melodies to Thee belong!
Or when, in paler tints array'd,
The evening slowly spreads her shade,
That soothing shade, that grateful gloom,
Can more than day's enlivening bloom
Still every fond and vain desire,
And calmer, purer thoughts inspire;
From earth the pensive spirit free,
And lead the soften'd heart to Thee.
In every scene thy hands have dress'd,
In every form by thee impress'd,
Upon the mountain's awful head,
Or where the sheltering woods are spread;
In every note that swells the gale,
Or tuneful stream that cheers the vale,
The cavern's depth or echoing grove,
A voice is heard of praise and love.
As o'er thy work the seasons roll,
And soothe, with change of bliss, the soul,
Oh, never may their smiling train
Pass o'er the human scene in vain!
But oft as on the charm we gaze,
Attune the wondering soul to praise;
And be the joys that most we prize
The joys that from thy favour rise!

SONNET.

To Twilight.

Meek twilight! haste to shroud the solar ray,
And bring the hour my pensive spirit loves;
When o'er the hill is shed a paler day,
That gives to stillness, and to night, the groves.
Ah, let the gay, the roseate morning hail,
When in the various blooms of light array'd,
She bids fresh beauty live along the vale,
And rapture tremble in the vocal shade:
Sweet is the lucid morning's opening flower,
Her choral melodies benignly rise:
Yet dearer to my soul the shadowy hour,
At which her blossoms close, her music dies:
For then mild Nature, while she droops her head,
Wakes the soft tear 'tis luxury to shed.

SONG.

Ah, Evan, by thy winding stream
How once I lov'd to stray,
And view the morning's reddening beam,
Or charm of closing day!

To yon dear grot by Evan's side,
How oft my steps were led,
Where far beneath the waters glide,
And thick the woods are spread!

But I no more a charm can see
In Evan's lovely glades;
And drear and desolate to me
Are those enchanting shades.

While far — how far from Evan's bowers,
My wandering lover flies;
Where dark the angry tempest lowers,
And high the billows rise!

And O, where'er the wanderer goes,
Is that poor mourner dear,
Who gives, while soft the Evan flows,
Each passing wave a tear!

And does he now that grotto view?
On those steep banks still gaze?
In fancy does he still pursue
The Evan's lovely maze?

O come! repass the stormy wave,
O toil for gold no more!
Our love a dearer pleasure gave
On Evan's peaceful shore.

Leave not my breaking heart to mourn
The joys so long denied;
Ah, soon to those green banks return,
Where Evan meets the Clyde!

SONNET.

To the Moon.

The glittering colours of the day are fled —
  Come, melancholy orb! that dwell'st with night,
Come, and o'er earth thy wandering lustre shed,
  Thy deepest shadow, and thy softest light.
To me congenial is the gloomy grove,
  When with faint rays the sloping uplands shine;
That gloom, those pensive rays, alike I love,
  Whose sadness seems in sympathy with mine.
But most for this, pale orb! thy light is dear,
  For this, benignant orb! I hail thee most,
That while I pour the unavailing tear,
  And mourn that hope to me in youth is lost —
Thy light can visionary thoughts impart,
And lead the Muse to soothe a suffering heart.

HABITUAL DEVOTION.

While thee I seek, protecting Power!
  Be my vain wishes still'd;
And may this consecrated hour
  With better hopes be fill'd!

Thy love the powers of thought bestow'd;
  To thee my thoughts would soar;
Thy mercy o'er my life has flow'd; —
  That mercy I adore!

In each event of life, how clear
Thy ruling hand I see!
Each blessing to my soul more dear,
Because conferr'd by Thee!

In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.

When gladness wings my favour'd hour,
Thy love my thoughts shall fill;
Resign'd, when storms of sorrow lour,
My soul shall meet thy will.

My lifted eye, without a tear,
The louring storm shall see;
My stedfast heart shall know no fear;
That heart will rest on Thee!

ELEANOR ANNE FRANKLIN,

1790—1825,

Was the daughter of Mr. Porden, an architect, and wife of the enterprising Captain Franklin. She wrote *The Veils, or the Triumph of Constancy; Cœur de Lion, or the Third Crusade;* and *The Arctic Expedition.* She died in 1825.

The following extract is from *Cœur de Lion.* Queen Berengaria, in the garb of a minstrel, has arrived at the castle of Trivallis, where Richard is confined.

She left her steed beneath the beechen shade,
" And art thou there? my best belov'd!" she said;
" Upbraiding all that to thy help should fly,
" Nor think'st what fond, what anxious heart is nigh."

Eve's last soft flushes fade, and all is still,
While veil'd in gloom, she climbs the arduous hill.
Rude was the path, nor oft by pilgrim worn,
O'er-grown with briars, long, wildering and forlorn:

Scarce might the horseman trace that dangerous way,
Through brakes, impervious to the summer day,
Now wrapt in night: while onward as she hies,
Scar'd at her step, the birds of carnage rise.

At last, yet shrouded in the castle's shade,
Cautious she cross'd its spacious esplanade;

Mark'd each strong wall, with towers begirt around,
The massy keep what lofty turrets crown'd;
The boy who never dreamt of war might know
Those awful ramparts would but mock the foe;
While not one light the abode of man confest,
Or gave the weary pilgrim hope of rest.
Those grated loopholes o'er the gate — ah, there
Perchance her Richard wastes with secret care!
Whose gifts were kingdoms, now by famine dies —
His only prospect those relentless skies,
His only visitant the bats, that prowl
Round the grim tower, or nightly-hooting owl!

Mournful she stood; but soon the breeze that sighs
Through her lone harp, bids other thoughts arise.
"Yet, yet," she said, "some dear familiar strain
May reach his cell, and bolts and bars be vain;
While should some jealous warder mark the lay,
'Tis but a minstrel sings to cheer his way.
Ah, me! that air to early love so dear,
Even in the tomb might rouse my Richard's ear;
Oh! could I pour his deep clear tones along,
And steal his accents as I steal his song!

'Frown, frown, Clorinda — I would prize
Thy smile o'er all that arms might gain;
O'er wealth and fame: yet mock my sighs,
My faded cheek, my tears despise,
Nor I my fate arraign;
While every rival's grief I see,
And know that all are scorn'd like me.'"

She ceas'd, — for from on high a fuller tone
Though faint in distance, blended with her own;
That voice, those words, could come from one alone.

" O smile not, if thou e'er bestow
On others, grace I think sincere;
Such smiles are like the beams that glow
On the dark torrent's bridge of snow,
And wreck the wretch they cheer.
Thine icy heart I well can bear,
But not the love that others share."

Bright hour of rapture! who may dare to tell
In her fond breast what blended feelings swell!
With parted lips, clos'd eyes, and hands comprest,
To still the' impetuous beatings of her breast,
Listening she stood: while conscious memory strays
To that blest hour when first she heard the lays.
Ecstatic dream — at length her faltering tongue
Its grief express'd in emblematic song: —

" The widow'd dove can never rest,
The felon kite has robb'd her nest;
With wing untir'd she seeks her mate,
To share or change his dreadful fate."

Again she paus'd, and listening, from on high
Caught from the friendly gale the faint reply.

" But kites a higher power obey;
Th' Imperial Eagle claims the prey —

Hence! to his spacious eyrie go,
The Eagle is a nobler foe."

She strikes the harp — " Farewell! farewell!"
Her thrilling notes of transport swell: —

" The monarch bird may build his nest
On oak, or tower, or mountain crest,
But love can match his daring flight,
Can fell the tree, or scale the height."

" Ho! who art thou — " a sturdy warder calls,
" That dar'st to sing beneath Trivallis' walls?" —
" A wandering bard, good friend, who fain would win
" These awful gates to let the weary in." —
" Nay, hence! nor dare to touch thy harp again,
" And thank thy saints 'twas I that heard the strain:
" Tir'd as thou art, fly swiftly o'er the heath,
" And shun these walls as thou wouldst shun thy death."

But was that pilgrim weary? Oh! less fleet
The mountain chamois plies its fearless feet:
" Farewell! my ears are blest though not my eyes,
Thy chains shall fall," she warbles as she flies:
" Thou gentle guardian of my steps, my will,
Take my soul's blessing, and direct me still.
At Haguenau soon the empire's magnates meet,
Oh! touch the Eagle's heart — oh, guide my wandering feet."

SUSANNA BLAMIRE,

1747—1794,

WHOSE poetry was so highly esteemed in her own day that she was styled "the Muse of Cumberland," was the daughter of William Blamire, Esq., a gentleman of station and repute in the county named; where she was born in the year 1747. Losing her mother when she was only seven years of age, she was early thrown upon her own mental resources: and she for some years gave herself completely up to her studies. That her application was effectual, we find from the fact that at the age of nineteen, and even before, she wrote some very excellent poems. She died at Carlisle in 1794: her writings, however, were not published in a collected form for some years.

The characteristics of Miss Blamire's poetry are considerable tenderness of feeling, very gracefully expressed, and a refined delicacy of imagination, which, whilst it never thrills, always pleases. Her poem called "The Nabob," which describes the return of an Indian adventurer to the home of his youth, is a very affecting and delightful production. Her songs, though not without marks of elaboration, display great simplicity and force of feeling. I select two specimens:

SONG.

What ails this heart o' mine?
What ails thy watery ee?
What gars me a' turn cauld as death
When I take leave o' thee?
When thou art far awa'
Thou 'lt dearer grow to me;
But change o' place and change o' folk,
May gar thy fancy jee!

When I gae out at e'en,
Or walk at morning air,
Ilk rustling bush will seem to say,
I us'd to meet thee there.
Then I 'll sit down an' cry,
And live aneath the tree;
And when a leaf fa's in my lap,
I 'll ca 't a word frae thee.

I 'll hie me to the bower
That thou wi' roses tied,
And where wi' many a blushing bud
I strove mysell to hide.
I 'll doat on ilka spot
Where I ha'e been with thee;
And ca' to mind some kindly word
By ilka burn and tree!

Wi' sic thoughts in my mind,
Time through the world may gae,

And find my heart in twenty years
The same as 't is to-day.
'T is thoughts that bind the soul,
And keep friends i' the ee,
And gin I think I see thee aye,
What can part thee and me!

The authorship of the following well-known and justly-admired song was long unknown, but there is now no doubt that it is the production of Miss Blamire.

THE SILLER CROWN.

And ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare,
Gin ye 'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair.
O wha would buy a silken gown
Wi' a poor broken heart!
O what 's to me a siller crown
Gin frae my love I part!

The mind wha's every wish is pure
Far dearer is to me;
And ere I 'm forc'd to break my faith,
I 'll lay me down and dee!
For I have pledg'd my virgin troth
Brave Donald's fate to share;
And he has gi'en to me his heart
Wi' a' its virtues rare.

His gentle manners won my heart,
He gratefu' took the gift;
Could I but think to see it back,
It wad be waur than theft!
For longest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I 'm forc'd to break my troth,
I 'll lay me down an dee!

MRS. MARY BRUNTON.

1778—1818.

THIS lady, justly celebrated for her excellent novels of *Self-control, Discipline,* and *Emmeline,* was born in 1778 in the Island of Orkney. Her father, Colonel Balfour, caused her to be more than ordinarily well educated: yet not to the exclusion of household cares and duties. In her thirtieth year she became the wife of the Rev. Alexander Brunton, a clergyman of the Scotch church, late professor of Hebrew in the University of Edinburgh, with whom she lived for many years most happily, and whom she left a sorrowing widower in 1818. Of her novels it is not necessary here to speak; the more especially as their great merit has been universally acknowledged. Her poetical compositions are extremely few: but they all exhibit the characteristics of her pen—great force of thought and gracefulness of composition. I extract only one of her productions; which she calls

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

When thou at eventide art roaming
Along the elm-o'ershaded walk,
Where, past, the eddying stream is foaming,
Beneath its tiny cataract,
Where I with thee was wont to talk,—

Think then upon the days gone by,
And heave a sigh!

When sails the moon above the mountains,
And cloudless skies are purely blue,
And sparkle in the light the fountains,
And darker frowns the lonely yew,—
Then be thou melancholy too,
When musing on the hours I prov'd
With thee, belov'd!.

When wakes the dawn upon thy dwelling,
And lingering shadows disappear,
And soft the woodland songs are swelling
A choral anthem on thine ear,—
Think — for that hour to thought is dear!
And then her flight remembrance wings
To by-past things.

To me, through every season, dearest,
In every scene — by day, by night,
Thou present to my mind appearest
A quenchless star — for ever bright!
My solitary, sole delight!
Alone — in grove — by shore — at sea,
I think of thee!

ANNA LÆTITIA BARBAULD,

1743—1825,

WAS the daughter of the Reverend John Aiken, D.D., of Kibworth Harcourt, in Leicestershire, where she was born in 1743. She very early evinced a remarkable aptitude for study; even in her infancy she was described by her mother, as "a little girl who was as eager to learn as her instructors could be to teach her; and who, at two years old, could read sentences and little stories in her *wise book*, roundly, without spelling, and, in half a year more, could read as well as most women."

Her father appears to have feared that she would become too fond of letters; for, until she was fifteen years of age, he resolutely refused her his permission to study the learned languages. We find, notwithstanding, that she acquired considerable knowledge of both Latin and Greek.

Her first volume of poems was published in 1773, she being then thirty years of age. The success of the work was remarkably great: it passed through four editions within the first year.

In 1774 she became the wife of the Reverend Rochemont Barbauld, a dissenting minister. For a consider-

able number of years, Mrs. Barbauld was engaged with her husband in the laborious work of tuition: and many individuals now alive can testify to the singular talent she displayed in her arduous vocation. Lord Denman, William Taylor, Esquire, of Norwich, and other eminent persons, whose names escape me, were amongst Mr. Barbauld's pupils.

After a continental tour in 1785, Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld settled at Hampstead, where they remained until 1802; in which year they removed to Stoke Newington, where Mrs. Barbauld continued her literary pursuits with great ardour. The death of her husband in 1808, however, interrupted her labours; and, though she resumed them in 1810, they were not destined to be of long continuance: for some unjust and unkind criticisms upon a poem published in 1812, led her to resolve upon retiring from the literary world. She lived for many years in undisturbed peace, and died in 1825, in the eighty-second year of her age, deeply and deservedly lamented.

Mrs. Barbauld's poetry exhibits, in a high degree, the characteristic qualities of female genius. The quick intuitive perception, the chaste tenderness, the delicate, *musical* flow of thought, that distinguish the female mind, are very forcibly and fully developed by Mrs. Barbauld. In these respects she is second only to Mrs. Hemans; whilst in many other points of view she is decidedly a greater and more instructive writer.

The following Sonnet is a fair sample of our author's gracefulness of thought and style. She inscribes it —

TO A LADY WITH SOME FLOWERS.

Flowers to the Fair! to you these flowers I bring,
And strive to greet you with an earlier spring.
Flowers sweet and gay, and delicate like you,
Emblems of innocence and beauty, too.
With flowers the Graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowery wreaths consenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltless garden grew.
To loftier forms and rougher tasks assign'd,
The sheltering oak resists the stormy wind,—
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows;
But this soft family, to cares unknown,
Were born for pleasures and delight alone.
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They spring to cheer the sense and glad the heart.
Nor blush, my fair, to own you copy these;
Your best, your sweetest empire is — to please.

One of Mrs. Barbauld's most admired productions is her "Ode to Spring:" and I think that the praise commonly bestowed upon this poem is amply deserved. It is full of beautiful thoughts, and contains some imagery of the most chaste and elegant description. It is, moreover, a most happy imitation of the style of Collins: a very difficult model to copy.

ODE TO SPRING.

Sweet daughter of a rough and stormy sire,
Hoar Winter's blooming child, delightful Spring!
Whose unshorn locks with leaves
And swelling buds are crown'd;

From the green islands of eternal youth,
(Crown'd with fresh blooms, and ever-springing shade)
Turn, hither turn thy step,
O thou, whose powerful voice,

More sweet than softest touch of Doric reed,
Or Lydian flute, can soothe the madding winds,
And through the stormy deep
Breathe thy own tender calm.

Thee, best belov'd! the virgin train await,
With songs and festal rites, and joy to rove
Thy blooming wilds among,
And vales and dewy lawns,

With untir'd feet; and cull thy earliest sweets
To weave fresh garlands for the glowing brow
Of him, the favour'd youth,
That prompts their whisper'd sigh.

Unlock thy copious stores; those tender showers
That drop their sweetness on the infant buds,
And silent dews that swell
The milky ear's green stem,

And feed the flowering osier's early shoots;
And calls those winds which through the whispering boughs
With warm and pleasant breath
Salute the blowing flowers.

Now let me sit beneath the whitening thorn,
And mark thy spreading tints steal o'er the dale;
And watch with patient eye
Thy fair unfolding charms.

O nymph! approach, while yet the temperate sun
With bashful forehead, through the cool moist air
Throws his young maiden beams,
And with chaste kisses woos

The earth's fair bosom; while the streaming veil
Of lucid clouds with kind and frequent shade,
Protects thy modest blooms
From his severer blaze.

Sweet is thy reign, but short; the red dog-star
Shall scorch thy tresses, and the mower's scythe
Thy greens, thy flow'rets all,
Remorseless shall destroy.

Reluctant shall I bid thee, then, farewell;
For Oh! not all that Autumn's lap contains,
Nor Summer's ruddiest fruits,
Can aught for thee atone,

Fair Spring! whose simplest promise more delights
Than all their largest wealth, and through the heart
Each joy and new-born hope
With softest influence breathes.

One of the chief literary faults of the era immediately preceding our own was a certain *abstractedness* of thought, which I cannot better describe than by calling it a too strong tendency towards the Ideal. Our writers shrank from Reality; shrank, I think, too far from it. They spiritualised all that they attempted to describe: lifted their subjects into the clouds; and too often, alas! left them there. And the result of this error was that they distanced the sympathies, and frequently failed to interest the reader.

The Female poets of the time fell the most readily into the mistake, and well nigh deluged the poetic world with their cloudy abstractions and etherealised personifications. Sentiments, feelings, and passions were all refined into deities, and addressed as if they were superintendents of human fate and conduct. Nothing is more common, in the works of the period referred to, than to meet with poems *To Sensibility* — *To Hope* — *To Wisdom* — *To Indolence* — *To Fear* — *To Health* — *To Simplicity*, and so forth: and nothing can well be more drowsy than the effect of such productions.

Mrs. Barbauld fell partially into this fault. Her Poems contain many of these abstractions: and any neglect that her works may have experienced, must, I am inclined to believe, be attributed chiefly to this

cause. The following poem is, I think, one of the best samples I can select of the faulty style to which I refer.

HYMN TO CONTENT.

O thou! the nymph with placid eye!
O seldom found, yet ever nigh!
Receive my temperate vow:
Not all the storms that shake the pole
Can e'er disturb thy halcyon soul,
And smooth unalter'd brow.

O come, in simple vest array'd,
With all thy sober cheer display'd,
To bless my longing sight;
Thy mien composed, thy even pace,
Thy meek regard, thy matron grace,
And chaste subdued delight.

No more by varying passions beat,
O gently guide my pilgrim feet
To find thy hermit cell;
Where in some pure and equal sky
Beneath thy soft indulgent eye
The modest virtues dwell.

Simplicity in Attic vest,
And Innocence with candid breast,
And clear undaunted eye;
And Hope, who points to distant years,
Fair opening through the vale of tears
A vista to the sky.

There Health, through whose calm bosom glide,
The temperate joys in even tide,
That rarely ebb or flow;
And Patience there, thy sister meek,
Presents her mild unvarying cheek
To meet the offered blow.

Her influence taught the Phrygian sage
A tyrant master's wanton rage
With settled smiles to meet;
Inured to toil and bitter bread,
He bowed his meek submitted head,
And kissed thy sainted feet.

But thou, oh nymph, retired and coy,
In what brown hamlet dost thou joy
To tell thy tender tale?
The lowliest children of the ground,
Moss-rose and violet, blossom round,
And lily of the vale.

O say, what soft propitious hour,
I best may choose to hail thy power,
And court thy gentle sway?
When Autumn, friendly to the Muse,
Shall thy own modest tints diffuse,
And shed thy milder day.

When Eve, her dewy star beneath,
Thy balmy spirit loves to breathe,
And every storm is laid;

If such an hour was e'er thy choice,
Oft let me hear thy soothing voice
Low whispering in the shade.

Mrs. Barbauld's muse is highly devotional. Her religious poems are very purely beautiful in sentiment; and her sense of reliance on the Deity is very strong and admirable. The following lines will prove it.

ON THE DEITY.

I read God's awful name emblazon'd high
With golden letters on th' illumin'd sky;
Nor less the mystic characters I see
Wrought in each flower, inscribed on every tree;
In every leaf that trembles to the breeze
I hear the voice of God among the trees.
With Thee in shady solitudes I walk,
With Thee in busy crowded cities talk;
In every creature own Thy forming power,
In each event Thy providence adore.

Thy hopes shall animate my drooping soul,
Thy precepts guide me and Thy fear control:
Thus shall I rest, unmov'd by all alarms,
Secure within the temple of Thine arms;
From anxious cares, from gloomy terrors free,
And feel myself omnipotent in Thee.

Then when the last, the closing hour draws nigh,
And earth recedes before my swimming eye,—

When trembling on the doubtful edge of fate
I stand, and stretch my view to either state: —
Teach me to quit this transitory scene
With decent triumph and a look serene;
Teach me to fix my ardent hopes on high,
And having lived to Thee, in Thee to die!

It is, indeed, in devotional subjects that Mrs. Barbauld shows her greatest eloquence and strength. Whilst writing on religion her faculties seem thoroughly to clear and concentrate themselves: and then it is that her spirit pours forth its treasures most abundantly and purely. There is something very stirring and thrilling in this

HYMN.

Jehovah reigns: let every nation hear,
And at his footstool bow with holy fear;
Let Heaven's high arches echo with His name,
And the wide peopled earth His praise proclaim;
Then send it down to hell's deep glooms resounding,
Through all her caves in dreadful murmurs sounding.

He rules with wide and absolute command
O'er the broad ocean and the steadfast land:
Jehovah reigns, unbounded and alone,
And all creation hangs beneath His throne.
He reigns alone: let no inferior nature
Usurp or share the throne of the Creator.

He saw the struggling beams of infant light
Shoot through the massy gloom of ancient night;

His spirit hush'd the elemental strife,
And brooded o'er the kindling seeds of life:
Seasons and months begin the long procession,
And measured o'er the year in bright succession.

The joyful sun sprung up th' ethereal way,
Strong as a giant, as a bridegroom gay;
And the pale moon diffused her shadowy light,
Superior o'er the dusky brow of night:
Ten thousand glittering lamps the skies adorning,
Numerous as dewdrops from the womb of morning.

Earth's blooming face with rising flowers He dress'd
And spread a verdant mantle o'er her breast;
Then from the hollow of His hand He pours
The circling waters round her winding shores;
The new-born world in their cool arms embracing,
And with soft murmurs still her banks caressing.

At length she rose complete in finish'd pride,
All fair and spotless, like a virgin bride;
Fresh with untarnish'd lustre as she stood,
Her maker bless'd His work and called it good;
The morning stars with joyful acclamation,
Exulting sung, and hail'd the new creation.

Yet this fair world, the creature of a day,
Though built by God's right hand, must pass away;
And long oblivion creep o'er mortal things,
The fate of Empires, and the pride of Kings;
Eternal night shall veil their proudest story,
And drop the curtain o'er all human glory.

The sun himself, with weary clouds oppress,
Shall in his silent dark pavilion rest;
His golden urn shall broke and useless lie,
Amidst the common ruins of the sky!
The stars rush headlong in the wild commotion,
And bathe their glittering foreheads in the ocean.

But fix'd, O God! for ever stands Thy throne;
Jehovah reigns, a universe alone:
Th' eternal fire that feeds each vital flame,
Collected or diffused is still the same.
He dwells within His own unfathom'd essence,
And fills all space with His unbounded presence.

But oh! our highest notes the theme debase,
And silence is our least injurious praise:
Cease, cease your songs, the daring flight control,
Revere him in the stillness of the soul.
With silent duty meekly bend before him,
And deep within your inmost hearts adore him.

LADY ANNE BARNARD.

1750—1825.

THIS lady was a daughter of James Lindsay, fifth Earl of Balcarras, and was born in 1750. She became the wife of Sir Andrew Barnard, librarian to George the Third, in the year 1771. In that year, or in the following, she wrote the touching ballad of *Auld Robin Gray;* the authorship of which she kept a secret until the year 1823, when she divulged it to Sir Walter Scott. Lady Barnard wrote two Continuations to the ballad, which, however, are generally considered to be inferior to the original poem.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

When the sheep are in the fauld, when the cows come hame,
When a' the weary world to quiet rest are gane,
The woes of my heart fa' in showers frae my ee,
Unkenn'd by my gudeman, who soundly sleeps by me.

Young Jamie loo'd me well, and sought me for his bride,
But saving ae crown-piece, he 'd naething else beside.
To make the crown a pound, my Jamie gaed to sea;
And the crown and the pound, O they were baith for me!

Before he had been gane a twelvemonth and a day,
My father brak his arm, our cow was stown away;
My mother she fell sick—my Jamie was at sea—
And auld Robin Gray — oh! he came a-courting me.

My father cou'dna work — my mother cou'dna spin ;
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I cou'dna win ;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and, wi' tears in his ee,
Said "Jenny, oh, for their sakes, will you marry me?"

My heart it said na, and I look'd for Jamie back ;
But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a wrack :
His ship it was a wrack ! Why didna Jamie dee ?
Or wherefore am I spared to cry out, Woe is me !

My father argued sair — my mother didna speak,
But she look'd in my face till my heart was like to break ;
They gied him my hand, but my heart was in the sea ;
And so auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been his wife, a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my door,
I saw my Jamie's ghaist — I cou'dna think it he,
Till he said, "I 'm come hame, my love, to marry thee!"

O sair, sair did we greet, and mickle say of a',
Ae kiss we took, na mair — I bad him gang awa'.
I wish that I were dead, but I 'm no like to dee ;
For O, I 'm but young to cry out, Woe is me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena much to spin ;
I darena think of Jamie, for that wad be a sin.
But I will do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For auld Robin Gray, oh! he is sae kind to me.

MRS. ANNE GRANT,

1755—1838,

A CELEBRATED Scotch poetess, was the daughter of an officer in the British army named Macvicar, and was born at Glasgow in the year 1755. Her father's profession leading him into America, he took his family with him, and there Miss Macvicar spent seven of her youthful years. Mr. Macvicar and his family returned to Scotland in 1768; and, in 1779, his daughter married the Reverend James Grant, who subsequently became minister of Laggan, in Inverness-shire. The death of her husband in 1801, left Mrs. Grant and her eight children quite unprovided for: and under these distressing circumstances it was that literature (which had previously been her chief amusement) was now resorted to as a means of subsistence. An education of rough experience, combined with a naturally shrewd, powerful, and sensitive mind, made Mrs. Grant a highly effective and successful writer; and the fame of her literary abilities (even before she published any fruits of them) was so great, that three thousand persons gave her their names as subscribers to her poem of the *Highlanders*. The success of this fine poem relieved her temporarily from her embarrassments, but she still had many privations to bear. In a few years she removed finally to Edinburgh, where she was called upon

to endure worse afflictions, in the death of her children, one after another, until only her youngest son was left to her. In 1825, George the Fourth, at the instance of Sir Walter Scott and other friends, granted our authoress a pension of 100*l.* per annum, which she lived to enjoy until 1838, when she died in the eighty-fourth year of her age.

EXTRACT FROM "THE HIGHLANDERS."

No hamlet without some Widow, who is in a great measure supported, and saved from the disgrace of a mendicant life, by the little society.

Where yonder ridgy mountains bound the scene,
The narrow opening glens that intervene
Still shelter, in some lowly nook obscure,
One poorer than the rest, — where all are poor;
Some *widow'd Matron*, hopeless of relief,
Who to her secret breast confines her grief;
Dejected sighs the wintry night away,
And lonely muses all the summer day:
Her gallant sons, who, smit with honour's charms,
Pursued the phantom Fame through war's alarms,
Return no more; stretch'd on Hindostan's plain,
Or sunk beneath the' unfathomable main;
In vain her eyes the watery waste explore,
For heroes — fated to return no more!
Let others bless the morning's reddening beam
For to her peace, it breaks the' illusive dream
That, in their prime of manly bloom confest,
Restor'd the long-lost warriors to her breast;

And as they strove, with smiles of filial love,
Their widow'd parents' anguish to remove,
Through her small casement broke the' intrusive day,
And chas'd the pleasing images away!
No time can e'er her banish'd joys restore,
For, ah! a heart once broken heals no more.
The dewy beams that gleam from pity's eye,
The "still small voice" of sacred sympathy,
In vain the mourner's sorrows would beguile,
Or steal from weary woe one languid smile;
Yet what they can they do, — the scanty store,
So often open'd for the wandering poor,
To her each cottager complacent deals,
While the kind glance the melting heart reveals;
And still, when evening streaks the west with gold,
The milky tribute from the glowing fold
With cheerful haste officious children bring,
And every smiling flower that decks the Spring:
Ah! little know the fond attentive train,
That Spring and flowrets smile for her in vain:
Yet hence they learn to reverence modest woe,
And of their little all a part bestow.
Let those to wealth and proud distinction born,
With the cold glance of insolence and scorn
Regard the suppliant wretch, and harshly grieve
The bleeding heart their bounty would relieve,—
Far different these;—while from a bounteous heart
With the poor sufferer they divide a part;
Humbly they own that all they have is given
A boon precarious from indulgent Heaven:
And the next blighted crop, or frosty spring,
Themselves to equal indigence may bring.

It is not difficult to distinguish in this passage a touch of simple pathos, such as might have been given by the hand of Goldsmith. Warm, unaffected and homely, Mrs. Grant's strains might often be mistaken for productions of that fine poet's pen.

Mrs. Grant appears to have been one of the first among modern writers who drew attention to the striking and romantic features of Highland life and scenery: and in this respect she may justly be considered the precursor of Scott and those other writers who have since attached so much interest to that subject. Her *Letters from the Mountains*, and her *Essays on the Superstitions of the Highlanders*, convey much information, and exhibit great ability.

MRS. ANNE HUNTER,

1742—1821,

WIFE of the celebrated John Hunter, and sister of Sir Everard Home, was born in 1742, and died in 1821. She is the author of several very beautiful poems, of which the following are specimens:

TO-MORROW.

How heavy falls the foot of Time!
How slow the lingering quarters chime,
Through anxious hours of long delay!
In vain we watch the silent glass,
More slow the sands appear to pass,
While disappointment marks their way.

To-morrow — still the phantom flies,
Flitting away before our eyes,
Eludes our grasp, is pass'd and gone;
Daughter of hope, Night o'er thee flings
The shadow of her raven wings,
And in the morning thou art flown!

Delusive sprite! from day to day,
We still pursue thy pathless way:
Thy promise broken o'er and o'er,
Man still believes, and is thy slave;
Nor ends the chase but in the grave,
For there *to-morrow* is no more.

The fancy contained in the three last lines of the second stanza of this poem has always appeared to me particularly happy. Such fancies are very frequent in Mrs. Hunter's works.

There is much sweetness, too, in the following

SIMILE.

I saw the wild rose on its parent thorn,
Half-clos'd, soft blushing, thro' the glittering dew,
Wave on the breeze and scent the breath of morn;
Lelia, the lovely flower resembled you.

Scarce had it spread to meet the orb of day,
Its fragrant beauties opening to the view,
When ruffian blasts have torn the rose away:—
Lelia,—alas! it still resembles you!

So torn by wild and lawless passion's force
From every social tie thy lot must be;
At last oblivion shades thy future course,
And still the hapless flower resembles thee!

The beauty of the succeeding extracts will be apparent without comment.

THE LOT OF THOUSANDS.

When hope lies dead within the heart,
By secret sorrow long conceal'd,
We shrink lest looks or words impart
What may not be reveal'd.

'T is hard to smile when one would weep,
To speak when one would silent be;
To wake when one would wish to sleep,
And wake to agony.

Yet such the lot for thousands cast,
Who wander in this world of care,
And bend beneath the bitter blast,
To save them from despair.

Yet Nature waits her guests to greet,
Where disappointment cannot come;
And Time leads with unerring feet
The weary wanderer home.

THE OCEAN GRAVE.

Friends! when I die prepare my welcome grave,
Where the eternal Ocean rolls his wave;
Rough though the blast, still let his free-born breeze,
Which freshness wafts to earth from endless seas,
Sigh o'er my sleep, and let his glancing spray
Weep tear-drops sparkling with a heavenly ray;
A constant mourner then shall watch my tomb,
And nature deepen while it soothes the gloom.

O let that element whose voice had power
To cheer my darkest, soothe my loneliest hour;
Which through my life my spirit lov'd so well,
Still o'er my grave its tale of glory tell.

The generous Ocean whose proud waters bear
The spoil and produce they disdain to wear,
Whose wave claims kindred with the azure sky,
From whom reflected stars beam gloriously;
Emblem of God! unchanging, infinite,
Awful alike in loveliness and might;
Rolls still untiring like the tide of Time,
Binds man to man and mingles clime with clime;
And as the sun, which from each lake and stream,
Through all the world, where'er their waters gleam,
Collects the crowd his heavenly ray conceals,
And slakes the thirst which all creation feels,
So Ocean gathers tribute from each shore,
To bid each climate know its want no more.
Exil'd on earth, a fetter'd prisoner here,
Barr'd from all treasures which my soul holds dear,
The kindred soul, the fame my youth desir'd,
Whilst hope hath fled which once my bosom fir'd;
Dead to all joy, still to my fancy glow
Dreams of delight which heavenward thoughts bestow,
Not then in death shall I unconscious be
Of that whose whispers are Eternity.

SONG.

Far, far from me my love is fled,
In a light skiff he tempts the sea,
The young Desires his sails have spread,
And Hope his pilot deigns to be.

The promis'd land of varied joys,
  Which so delights his fickle mind,
In waking dreams his days employs,
  While I, poor I, sing to the wind.

But young Desires grow old and die,
  And Hope no more the helm may steer;
Beneath a dark and stormy sky
  Shall fall the late repentant tear.

While I, within my peaceful grot,
  May hear the distant tempest roar,
Contented with my humble lot,
  In safety on the friendly shore.

SONG.

O tuneful voice! I still deplore
Those accents which, though heard no more,
  Still vibrate on my heart;
In echo's cave I long to dwell,
And still would hear the sad farewell
  When we were doom'd to part.

Bright eyes! O that the task were mine
To guard the liquid fires that shine,
  And round your orbits play;
To watch them with a Vestal's care,
And feed with smiles a light so fair,
  That it may ne'er decay.

TO MY DAUGHTER,

On being separated from her on her marriage.

Dear to my heart as life's warm stream,
Which animates this mortal clay,
For thee I court the waking dream,
And deck with smiles the future day;
And thus beguile the present pain
With hopes that we shall meet again.

Yet will it be, as when the past
Twin'd every joy and care and thought,
And o'er our minds one mantle cast
Of kind affections finely wrought?
Ah, no! the groundless hope were vain,
For so we ne'er can meet again!

May he who claims thy tender heart
Deserve its love, as I have done!
For, kind and gentle as thou art,
If so belov'd, thou'rt fairly won.
Bright may the sacred torch remain,
And cheer thee till we meet again!

HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI,

1739—1821,

THE well-known friend of Dr. Johnson, was the daughter of Mr. John Salusbury, of Caernarvonshire. She was born in 1739, and married, first Mr. Thrale, the brewer, who was so warmly attached to Johnson, and subsequently Signor Piozzi, a music-master.

As an authoress, she is chiefly known by her tale called

THE THREE WARNINGS.

The tree of deepest root is found
Least willing still to quit the ground;
'T was therefore said by ancient sages,
That love of life increas'd with years
So much, that in our latter stages,
When pain grows sharp, and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears:
This great affection to believe,
Which all confess, but few perceive,
If old assertions can't prevail,
Be pleas'd to hear a modern tale.

When sports went round, and all were gay
On neighbour Dobson's wedding-day,
Death called aside the jocund groom
With him into another room;

And looking grave, "You must," says he,
"Quit your sweet bride, and come with me."
"With you! and quit my Susan's side!
With you!" the hapless husband cried;
"Young as I am — 'tis monstrous hard;
Besides, in truth I'm not prepar'd;
My thoughts on other matters go,
This is my wedding-day, you know."

What more he urg'd I have not heard,
His reasons could not well be stronger;
So Death the poor delinquent spar'd,
And left to live a little longer.
Yet, calling up a serious look,
His hour-glass trembled while he spoke,
"Neighbour," he said, "farewell! no more
Shall Death disturb your mirthful hour:
And farther, to avoid all blame
Of cruelty upon my name,
To give you time for preparation,
And fit you for your future station,
Three several warnings you shall have,
Before you're summon'd to the grave:
Willing for once I'll quit my prey,
And grant a kind reprieve;
In hopes you'll have no more to say,
But when I call again this way,
Well pleas'd the world will leave.'

To these conditions both consented,
And parted, perfectly contented.

What next the hero of our tale befell,
How long he liv'd, how wise, how well,
How roundly he pursued his course,
And smok'd his pipe, and strok'd his horse,
The willing Muse shall tell:
He chaffer'd then, he bought, he sold,
Nor once perceiv'd his growing old,
Nor thought of Death as near:
His friends not false, his wife no shrew,
Many his gains, his children few,
He pass'd his hours in peace:
But while he view'd his wealth increase,
While thus along Life's dusty road
The beaten track content he trod,
Old Time, whose haste no mortal spares,
Uncall'd, unheeded, unawares,
Brought on his eightieth year.

And now, one night, in musing mood,
As all alone he sat,
The unwelcome messenger of fate,
Once more before him stood.

Half kill'd with anger and surprise,
"So soon return'd!" old Dobson cries;
"So soon d'ye call it?" Death replies;
"Surely my friend, you're but in jest!
Since I was here before,
'Tis six and thirty years at least,
And you are now fourscore."
"So much the worse," the clown rejoin'd,
"To spare the aged would be kind;

However, see your search be legal;
And your authority — is 't regal?
Else you are come on a fool's errand,
With but a secretary's warrant;
Besides, you promis'd me Three Warnings,
Which I have look'd for nights and mornings!
But for that loss of time and ease,
I can recover damages."

"I know," cries Death, "that at the best,
I seldom am a welcome guest;
But don't be captious, friend, at least:
I little thought you 'd still be able
To stump about your farm and stable;
Your years have run to a great length,
I wish you joy, though, of your strength!"
"Hold"— says the farmer, "not so fast!
I have been lame these four years past."
"And no great wonder," Death replies,
"However, you still keep your eyes:
And sure to see one's loves and friends,
For legs and arms would make amends!"
"Perhaps," says Dobson, "so it might,
But latterly I 've lost my sight."
"This is a shocking story, 'faith,
Yet there 's some comfort, still," says Death;
"Each strive your sadness to amuse,
I warrant you hear all the news!"
"There 's none," cries he, "and if there were,
I 'm grown so deaf, I would not hear."
"Nay then," the spectre stern rejoin'd,
"These are unjustifiable yearnings;

If you are lame, and deaf, and blind,
You 've had your Three sufficient Warnings;
So, come along! no more we'll part!"
He said, and touch'd him with his dart;
And now old Dobson, turning pale,
Yields to his fate — so ends my tale.

ANN RADCLIFFE,

1764—1823,

WHOSE fame rests, as needs hardly to be said, upon her splendid but terrible novels of *The Italian* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, was a poetess of no mean pretensions. The pieces of verse interspersed in her various romances display the same peculiar powers which characterise her prose compositions; they are marked by great energy of imagination, and rich eloquence of style.

Mrs. Radcliffe was born in London, in 1764, of a respectable family named Ward. She married Mr. Radcliffe, a law-student, in 1787: and died in 1823.

TO THE WINDS.

Viewless, through Heaven's vast vault your course ye steer,
Unknown from whence ye come, or whither go!
Mysterious powers! I hear you murmur low,
Till swells your loud gust on my startled ear,
And, awful, seems to say — some God is near!
I love to list your midnight voices float
In the dread storm that o'er the ocean rolls,
And, while their charm the angry wave controls,
Mix with its sullen roar, and sink remote.
Then, rising in the pause, a sweeter note,
The dirge of spirits, who your deeds bewail,
A sweeter note oft swells while sleeps the gale!

But soon, ye sightless powers! your rest is o'er,
Solemn and slow, ye rise upon the air,
Speak in the shrouds, and bid the sea-boy fear,
And the faint-warbled dirge — is heard no more!

Oh! then I deprecate your awful reign!
The loud lament yet bear not on your breath!
Bear not the crash of bark far on the main,
Bear not the cry of men, who cry in vain,
The crew's dread chorus sinking into death!
Oh! give not these, ye powers! I ask alone,
As rapt I climb these dark romantic steeps,
The elemental war, the billow's moan;
I ask the still, sweet tear, that listening Fancy weeps.

THE GLOW-WORM.

How pleasant is the green-wood's deep-matted shade
On a midsummer's eve when the fresh rain is o'er;
When the yellow beams slope, and sparkle through the glade,
And swiftly in the thin air the ligh swallows soar!

But sweeter, sweeter still, when the sun sinks to rest,
And twilight comes on, with the fairies so gay
Tripping through the forest-walk, where flowers unprest
Bow not their tall heads beneath their frolic play.

To music's softest sounds they dance away the hour,
Till moonlight steals down among the trembling leaves,
And checkers all the ground, and guides them to the bower,
The long-haunted bower, where the nightingale grieves.

Then no more they dance, till her sad song is done,
But, silent as the night, to her mourning attend;
And often as her dying notes their pity have won,
They vow all her sacred haunts from mortals to defend.

When, down among the mountains, sinks the evening star,
And the changing moon forsakes this shadowy sphere,
How cheerless would they be, though they fairies are,
If I, with my pale light, came not near!

Yet cheerless though they 'd be, they 're ungrateful to my love!
For, often when the traveller 's benighted on his way,
And I glimmer in his path, and would guide him through the grove,
They bind me in their magic spells to lead him far astray;

And in the mire to leave him, till the stars are all burnt out,
While in strange-looking shapes, they frisk about the ground,
And afar in the woods they raise a dismal shout,
Till I shrink into my cell again, for terror of the sound!

But, see where all the tiny elves come dancing in a ring,
With the merry, merry pipe, and the tabour, and the horn,
And the timbrel so clear, and the lute with dulcet string,
Then round about the oak they go till peeping of the morn.

Down yonder glade two lovers steal, to shun the fairy queen,
Who frowns upon their plighted vows, and jealous is of me,
That yester eve I lighted them, along the dewy green,
To seek the purple flower whose juice from all her spells can free.

And now to punish me, she keeps afar her jocund band,
With the merry, merry pipe, and the tabour, and the lute;
If I creep near yonder oak she will wave her fairy wand,
And to me the dance will cease, and the music all be mute.

Oh! had I but that purple flower whose leaves her charms can foil,
And knew like fays to draw the juice, and throw it on the wind,
I'd be her slave no longer, nor the traveller beguile,
And help all faithful lovers, nor fear the fairy kind!

But soon the vapour of the woods will wander afar,
And the fickle moon will fade, and the stars disappear,
Then, cheerless will they be, though they fairies are,
If I with my pale light come not near!

SONG OF A SPIRIT.

In the sightless air I dwell,
On the sloping sunbeams play;
Delve the cavern's inmost cell,
Where never yet did daylight stray.

I dive beneath the green sea-waves,
And gambol in the briny deeps;
Skim every shore that Neptune laves,
From Lapland's plains to India's steeps.

Oft I mount with rapid force,
Above the wide earth's shadowy zone;
Follow the day-star's flaming course,
Through realms of space to thought unknown;

And listen to celestial sounds
That swell in air, unheard of men,
As I watch my nightly rounds
O'er woody steep and silent glen.

Under the shade of waving trees,
On the green bank of fountain clear,
At pensive eve I sit at ease,
While dying music murmurs near.

And oft, on point of airy clift
That hangs upon the western main,
I watch the gay tints passing swift,
And twilight veil the liquid plain.

Then, when the breeze has sunk away,
And Ocean scarce is heard to lave,
For me the sea-nymphs softly play
Their dulcet shells beneath the wave.

Their dulcet shells! — I hear them now;
Slow swells the strain upon mine ear;
Now faintly falls — now warbles low,
Till rapture melts into a tear.

The ray that silvers o'er the dew,
And trembles through the leafy shade,
And tints the scene with softer hue,
Calls me to rove the lonely glade;

Or hie me to some ruin'd tower,
Faintly shown by moonlight gleam,
When the lone wanderer owns my power,
In shadows dire that substance seem;

In thrilling sounds that murmur woe,
And pausing silence make more dread;
In music breathing from below
Sad, solemn strains, that wake the dead.

Unseen I move — unknown am fear'd;
Fancy's wildest dreams I weave;
And oft by bards my voice is heard
To die along the gales of eve.

MRS. HENRY ROLLS.

I AM not able to give any account at all of this lady. The following productions have been extracted from common-place books: the poetry, however, is any thing but common-place.

SIGHS.

There is a sigh — that half suppress,
  Seems scarce to heave the bosom fair;
It rises from the spotless breast,
  The first fair dawn of tender care.

There is a sigh — so soft, so sweet,
  It breathes not from the lip of woe;
'T is heard where conscious lovers meet,
  Whilst yet untold young passions glow.

There is a sigh — short, deep and strong,
  That on the lip of rapture dies;
It floats mild evening's shade along,
  When meet the fond consenting eyes.

There is a sigh — that speaks regret,
  Yet seems scarce conscious of its pain;
It tells of bliss remember'd yet,
  Of bliss that ne'er must wake again.

There is a sigh — that, deeply breathed,
Bespeaks the bosom's secret woe;
It says the flowers which Love had wreathed,
Are wither'd, ne'er again to blow.

There is a sigh — that slowly swells,
Then deeply breathes its load of care;
It speaks that in that bosom dwells
That last, worst pang, fond love's despair.

SMILES.

What is that smile that o'er the cheek
Of artless blooming childhood strays;
That revels in the dimple sleek —
That charms the mother's tender gaze?

'T is the bright sun of April's morn,
That rises with unsullied ray;
Nor marks the clouds, that swift are borne,
To wrap in shades the future day!

What is that soft, that languid smile,
That mingles with a tender sigh;
Light spreads the timid blush the while,
And sweetly sinks the melting eye?

'T is the bright dew-drop on the rose,
Sweet remnant of the early shower,
That will its ripen'd leaves unclose,
And to full fragrance spread the flower!

What is that smile, whose rapturous glow
Passion's impetuous breast inspires,
Whilst Pleasure's gaudy blossoms blow,
And the eye beams with guilty fires?

'T is the volcano's baleful blaze
That pours around a fatal light;
Whose victim dies that stops to gaze;
Whence safety is but found in flight!

Whence is that sad, that transient smile
That dawns upon the lip of woe;
That checks the deep-drawn sigh awhile,
And stays the tear that starts to flow?

'T is but a veil cast o'er the heart,
When youth's gay dreams have pass'd away;
When joy's faint lingering rays depart,
And the last gleams of hope decay!

What is that bright, that fearful smile,
Quick flashing o'er the brow of care;
When fades each fruit of mental toil,
And nought remains to check despair?

'T is the wild lurid lightning's gleam,
Swift bursting from a stormy cloud;
That spreads a bright destructive beam,
Then sinks into its sable shroud!

What is that smile, calm, fix'd at last,
On the hoar brow of reverend age,
When the world's changing scenes are past,
And nearly clos'd life's varied page?

'Tis the rich glowing western beam,
Bright spreading o'er the dark'ning skies;
That shows, by its mild parting gleam,
A cloudless heavenly morn shall rise!

THE WARRIORS' SONG.

Fill high the bowl! 'tis perhaps the last
The kindred warriors e'er may drain!
Oh, when to-morrow's fight is past,
How few to pledge it may remain!

Fill high the bowl! 't is perhaps the last
That Beauty's hand may yield to thine!
Oh, when it o'er her lip has pass'd,
It gives a joy more sweet than wine.

Fill high the bowl! 't is perhaps the last
That will beneath this roof be crown'd;
Soon the wild breeze that murmurs past
May sweep its ruin'd wall around.

Fill high the bowl! 't is perhaps the last
In which we hail our fathers' fame;
Oh, when 't is by our children pass'd,
May added glories gild their name!

Fill high the bowl! 't is perhaps the last—
In it come pledge the hero's grave!
For him Death's pang, ere felt, is past,
It lingers only to the slave.

LADY BURRELL

WROTE two volumes of poems, in 1793. They display considerable liveliness of fancy, but are occasionally coarse and vulgar. The two poems which the reader finds below are about the best in the collection.

CHLOE AND MYRA.

Chloe is elegant and pretty,
  But silly and affected;
Myra is sensible and witty,
  And by the wise respected.

When pretty Chloe I behold,
  I think myself her lover;
But ere I have my passion told,
  Her failings I discover.

When Myra talks, I 'm pleased to hear,
  And venerate her mind:
But in her face no charms appear,
  My wavering heart to bind.

Blindfold I should to Myra run,
  And swear to love her ever;
Yet when the bandage was undone,
  Should only think her clever.

With the full usage of my eyes,
I Chloe should decide for;
But when she talks, I *her* despise,
Whom, dumb, I could have died for!

My ear or eye must tortur'd be
If I make choice of either;
'T is therefore best I should agree —
Ladies! — to marry neither!

TO EMMA.

Why, pretty rogue! do you protest
The trick of stealing you detest?
'T is what you are doing every day,
Either in earnest or in play.
Cupid and you, 't is said, are cousins,
(*Au fait* in stealing hearts by dozens,)
Who make no more of shooting sparks,
Than schoolboys do of wounding larks;
Nay, what is worse, 't is my belief,
Though known to be an arrant thief,
Such powers of witchcraft are your own
That Justice slumbers on her throne;
And should you be arraign'd in court
For practising this cruel sport,
In spite of all the plaintiff's fury
Your smile would bribe both judge and jury.

LUCY AIKIN,

THE daughter of Dr. John Aikin, and niece of Mrs. Barbauld, seems to have inherited no small share of the genius of her family.

Miss Aikin has been engaged in various literary undertakings, in none of which perhaps has she been more successful than in her Poetry for Children, which is, probably, the most difficult style of verse that can be attempted. Miss Aikin very ably avoids a too great simplicity on the one hand, and a too refined diction on the other: and thus grasps the youthful mind with a sure hold.

THE BEGGAR MAN.

Around the fire, one winter night,
The farmer's rosy children sat;
The faggot lent its blazing light,
And jokes went round, and careless chat.

When, hark! a gentle hand they hear
Low tapping at the bolted door;
And thus to gain their willing ear,
A feeble voice was heard t' implore:—

"Cold blows the blast across the moor:
The sleet drives hissing in the wind:
Yon toilsome mountain lies before;
A dreary treeless waste behind.

"My eyes are weak and dim with age;
No road, no path, can I descry;
And these poor rags ill stand the rage
Of such a keen inclement sky.

"So faint I am — these tottering feet
No more my feeble frame can bear;
My sinking heart forgets to beat,
And drifting snows my tomb prepare.

"Open your hospitable door:
And shield me from the biting blast;
Cold, cold it blows across the moor
The weary moor that I have pass'd!"

With hasty step the farmer ran,
And close beside the fire they place
The poor half-frozen beggar-man,
With shaking limbs and pallid face.

The little children flocking came,
And warm'd his stiffening hands in theirs;
And busily the good old dame
A comfortable mess prepares.

Their kindness cheer'd his drooping soul;
And slowly down his wrinkled cheek
The big round tears were seen to roll,
And told the thanks he could not speak.

The children, too, began to sigh,
And all their merry chat was o'er;
And yet they felt, they knew not why,
More glad than they had done before.

This last verse has quite the manner and spirit of Wordsworth: indeed, the whole composition is full of the finest and most tender feeling.

As a sample of the clever manner in which Miss Aikin combines information with amusement, I select her little poem called

ARABIA.

O'er Arabia's desert sands
The patient camel walks;
Mid lonely caves and rocky lands
The fell hyæna stalks.
On the cool and shady hills
Coffee shrubs and tamarinds grow,
Headlong fall the welcome rills
Down the fruitful dells below.

The fragrant myrrh and healing balm
Perfume the passing gale;
Thick hung with dates, the spreading palm
Tow'rs o'er the peopled vale.
Locusts oft, a living cloud,
Hover in the darken'd air;
Like a torrent dashing loud,
Bringing famine and despair.

And often o'er the level waste
  The stifling hot winds fly;
Down falls the swain with trembling haste,
  The gasping cattle die.
Shepherd people on the plain
  Pitch their tents and wander free;
Wealthy cities they disdain,
  Poor,—yet blest with liberty.

MRS. AMELIA OPIE.

This estimable lady, who is a member of the Society of Friends, is chiefly known for her admirable prose stories, in which is contained a pure, simple, and sweet morality, not surpassed by any writer in our literature. She, however, published, in 1802, a volume of miscellaneous Poems, and, in 1834, a work entitled "*Lays for the Dead*," both of which are characterised by great tenderness and grace of feeling. Her song of *The Orphan Boy* is one of the most touching productions contained in our language.

THE ORPHAN BOY'S TALE.

Stay, lady, stay for mercy's sake,
And hear a helpless orphan's tale;
Ah! sure my looks must pity wake,
'T is want that makes my cheek so pale.
Yet I was once a mother's pride,
And my brave father's hope and joy;
But in the Nile's proud fight he died,
And I am now an orphan boy.

Poor foolish child! how pleas'd was I,
When news of Nelson's victory came,
Along the crowded streets to fly,
And see the lighted windows flame!

To force me home my mother sought,
She could not bear to see my joy ;
For with my father's life 't was bought,
And made me a poor orphan boy.

The people's shouts were long and loud,
My mother shuddering closed her ears;
"Rejoice, rejoice," still cried the crowd,
My mother answer'd with her tears.
"Why are you crying thus," said I,
"While others laugh and shout with joy?"
She kiss'd me — and with such a sigh!
She call'd me her poor orphan boy.

"What is an orphan boy?" I cried,
As in her face I look'd and smil'd;
My mother through her tears replied,
"You 'll know too soon, ill fated child!"
And now they 've toll'd my mother's knell,
And I 'm no more a parent's joy,
O Lady! I have learnt too well
What 't is to be an orphan boy.

O were I by your bounty fed!
— Nay, gentle lady, do not chide, —
Trust me, I mean to earn my bread;
The sailor's orphan boy has pride.
Lady, you weep! — ha! — this to me?
You 'll give me clothing, food, employ?
Look down, dear parents! look and see
Your happy, happy orphan boy.

It is a fault of the Female Poets of the last century that they expended their strength rather on sentiment than on feeling. This makes most of the verse which they produced, appear tame and unimpassioned; and it is a reason, perhaps the chief reason, why so many of their names have nearly passed into oblivion: for sentiment is, in its very nature, evanescent: and, even when painted in its brightest colours, lasts but a little while. It is a phosphorescent flame, flashing for a moment through the mental atmosphere, but giving neither warmth nor light: whilst true passion is a ray shot from the everlasting sun of the spiritual firmament, shedding a glow and a brightness upon all time. Of this true sterling sort is the pathos of Mrs. Opie.

SONG.

Go, youth belov'd, in distant glades
  New friends, new hopes, new joys to find!
Yet sometimes deign, 'midst fairer maids,
  To think on her thou leav'st behind.
Thy love, thy fate, dear youth, to share
  Must never be my happy lot;
But thou mayst grant this humble prayer,
  Forget me not, forget me not.

Yet, should the thought of my distress
  Too painful to thy feelings be,
Heed not the wish I now express,
  Nor ever deign to think on me:

But, oh! if grief thy steps attend,
If want, if sickness be thy lot,
And thou require a soothing friend,
Forget me not, forget me not!

From Mrs. Opie's numerous devotional poems I extract the subjoined

HYMN.

There 's not a leaf within the bower;
There 's not a bird upon the tree;
There 's not a dewdrop on the flower,
But bears the impress, Lord! of Thee.

Thy hand the varied leaf design'd,
And gave the bird its thrilling tone:
Thy power the dewdrop's tints combined,
Till like a diamond's blaze they shone.

Yes: dewdrops, leaves, and birds, and all,
The smallest like the greatest things;
The sea's vast space, the earth's wide ball,
Alike proclaim Thee King of Kings.

But man alone to bounteous Heaven
Thanksgiving's conscious strains can raise;
To favour'd man alone 't is given
To join the angelic choir in praise.

L.

Mrs. Opie's poems bear fresh evidence to the truth of an assertion more than once made in this work, that

woman's moral sentiments are generally in advance of man's. Those who doubt the fact will do well to remember how continually man's verse celebrates the infernal glories of war, the cruel excitements of the chase, or the selfish pleasures of bacchanalian enjoyment; and, on the other hand, how unceasingly woman's verse exposes the wickedness and folly of such pursuits. Very rarely do we find in the writings of the male sex, passages like the following, though we continually see similar sentiments in the works of our female writers: —

Alas! to think one Christian soul
At War's red shrine can worship still,
Nor heed, though seas of carnage roll,
Those awful words — "THOU SHALT NOT KILL!"

O Lord of all, and Prince of Peace,
Speed, speed the long-predicted day,
When War throughout the world shall cease,
And Love shall hold eternal sway!

Mrs. Opie's *Lays for the Dead* is a book of truest beauty: and, although the perusal of it resembles (from the mournfulness of its subjects) a visit to a churchyard, the effect it produces upon us is of a most pleasing character. It hushes all unquiet emotion; bids the cares of earth far into the distance; and awakens a calm sweet pensiveness of feeling, which nothing could make us wish to change. We seem to converse with

the Past and the Departed, and to stand on the very shore of the great ocean of Eternity.

It is very difficult to select fair samples of this book; for it is *as a whole* that its exquisite beauty is apparent: but I nevertheless subjoin two extracts, to show the pure tone which marks the volume.

REMEMBRANCE.

Where'er I stray, thou dear departed one,
I see thy form, thy voice I seem to hear!
And though thou art to brighter regions gone,
Thy smile still charms my eye, thy tones my ear!

Whene'er adown thy favourite walk I go,
Still, still I feel the pressure of thy arm;
And oh! so strong the sweet illusions grow,
I shun, I loathe whatever breaks the charm.

In vain I'm urged to join the social scene;
This silent shade alone has charms for me:
I love to be where I with thee have been;
And home, though desolate, is full of thee!

It is not difficult to perceive that the foregoing, as well as the following, lines refer to her excellent husband, the late John Opie, of the Royal Academy. It is impossible for sentiment to be more exquisitely feminine than this: —

A LAMENT.

There was an eye, whose partial glance
Could ne'er my numerous failings see;
There was an ear that heard untired
When others spoke in praise of me.

There was a heart time only taught
With warmer love for me to burn;
A heart whene'er from home I roved
Which fondly pined for my return.

There was a lip which always breathed,
E'en short farewells in tones of sadness;
There was a voice whose eager sound
My welcome spoke with heartfelt gladness.

There was a mind whose vigorous power
On mine its own effulgence threw,
And called my humble talents forth,
While thence its dearest joys it drew.

There was a love, which for my weal
With anxious fears would overflow;
Which wept, which pray'd, for me, and sought
From future ills to guard.—But now!—

That eye is closed, and deaf that ear,
That lip and voice are mute for ever;
And cold that heart of anxious love,
Which death alone from mine could sever:

And lost to me that ardent mind,
Which loved my various tasks to see;
And oh! of all the praise I gain'd,
His was the dearest far to me!

Now I unloved, uncheer'd, *alone*,
Life's dreary wilderness must tread,
Till He who heals the broken heart
In mercy bids me join the dead.

O Thou! who from thy throne on high,
Can'st heed the mourner's deep distress;
O Thou, who hear'st the widow's cry,
Thou! Father of the fatherless!

Though now I am a faded leaf,
That's sever'd from its parent tree,
And thrown upon a stormy tide,
Life's awful tide that leads to Thee! —

Still, gracious Lord! the voice of praise
Shall spring spontaneous from my breast;
Since, though I tread a weary way,
I trust that he I mourn is blest.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THIS distinguished lady, in many respects the most remarkable of our Female Poets, has attempted almost every kind of verse, and has succeeded in all she has tried. Lyrical, social, devotional, heroic, and domestic poems have alike proceeded from her pen, and in strains of equal beauty: while her muse has undeniably accomplished

> "Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme"

by any other writer of her sex. Her *Plays on the Passions* would have been marvellous productions, even had they been the work of a *Man*, of long and varied experience: but they become infinitely more so when we reflect that they were composed by a young *Female* writer, whose sex and station must have kept her comparatively secluded from the world of active life and emotion. Sir Walter Scott had, therefore, good reasons for saying —

> "That Avon's swans, while rang the grove
> With Monfort's hate and Basil's love, —
> Awakening at the inspired strain,
> Deem'd their own Shakspere lived again."

I think that Mrs. Baillie may be said to be the most purely and serenely intellectual of all our Female

Poets. There is a clearness, a plainness, a massiveness in her genius, which reminds one of the simple but severe perfection of a Doric column. Strength rather than elegance, chasteness rather than beauty, and proportion rather than grace, distinguish her productions. I do not mean to say that they want warmth; no verse can be more *living* and *thrilling* than hers is: but I mean that they have none of that glare which is often mistaken for true poetic fire, but is in fact only the unreal brilliancy of an ignis fatuus. There is nothing phosphorescent or stage-firelike in Mrs. Baillie's poetry: it is the calm, soft, refreshing, wholesome sunshine of a clear spring morning. Sir Walter Scott has likened Mrs. Baillie's muse to Shakspere's; I venture to think that it is more like Chaucer's.

The great characteristics of Mrs. Baillie's general style are vigour, clearness, and simplicity. Nothing can exceed the force and transparency of her compositions. I do not think that a strained, turgid, or unintelligible expression is to be found in her writings: every thought is plain, every image distinct, every conclusion unmistakeable. Much as Mrs. Baillie has published, I cannot call to mind a single hurried idea or undigested sentiment. We never meet with noise or bustle in her works: she is not at all of the steam-engine class of poets: everything is calm, unconscious, and serene. Deep as may be the emotions which she describes, she exhibits no symptoms of self disturbance. She is *above* her subject, just as a Shakspere or a Goethe is. There is none of the strained senti-

mentalism, none of the spasmodic effort, that we find in the productions of second-rate minds; but with a firm strong hand she grasps the very heart of passion, and lays its inmost secrets bare.

Before I speak of Mrs. Baillie's chief poetical efforts, her Tragedies, I would direct the reader's attention briefly to her miscellaneous poems.

A good idea of her simple style and natural sentiments will be gathered from the following lines

TO A CHILD.

Whose imp art thou, with dimpled cheek,
And curly pate and merry eye,
And arm and shoulder round and sleek,
And soft and fair? — thou urchin sly!

What boots it who, with sweet caresses,
First called thee his, — or squire or hind?
Since thou in every wight that passes,
Dost now a friendly playmate find.

Thy downcast glances, grave but cunning,
As fringed eyelids rise and fall;
Thy shyness swiftly from me running,
Is infantine coquetry all.

But far afield thou hast not flown;
With mocks and threats, half lisped, half spoken,
I feel thee pulling at my gown,
Of right good will thy simple token.

And thou must laugh and wrestle, too,
A mimic warfare with me waging;
To make, as wily lovers do,
Thy after-kindness more engaging.

The wilding rose, sweet as thyself,
And new-cropt daisies are thy treasure;
I 'd gladly part with worldly pelf
To taste again thy youthful pleasure.

But yet for all thy merry look,
Thy frisks and wiles, the time is coming
When thou shalt sit in cheerless nook
Thy weary spell or horn-book thumbing.

Well, let it be! — through weal and woe,
Thou know'st not now thy future range;
Life is a motley shifting show,
And thou a thing of hope and change.

As a further specimen of Mrs. Baillie's womanly tenderness of feeling, and also of her terse and concentrative style, I may quote her poem entitled —

A MOTHER TO HER WAKING INFANT.

Now in thy dazzled, half-oped eye,
Thy curled nose and lip awry,
Uphoisted arms and noddling head,
And little chin with crystal spread,
Poor helpless thing! what do I see
That I should sing of thee?

From thy poor tongue no accents come,
Which can but rub thy toothless gum:
Small understanding boasts thy face;
Thy shapeless limbs nor step nor grace:
A few short words thy feats may tell;
And yet I love thee well.

When wakes the sudden bitter shriek,
And redder swells thy little cheek;
When rattled keys thy woes beguile,
And through thine eyelids gleams the smile;
Still for thy weakly self is spent
Thy little silly plaint.

But when thy friends are in distress,
Thou 'lt laugh and chuckle ne'ertheless;
Nor with kind sympathy be smitten
Though all are sad but thee and kitten;
Yet, puny varlet that thou art,
Thou twitchest at the heart.

Thy smooth round cheek so soft and warm;
Thy pinky hand and dimpled arm;
Thy silken locks that scantly peep,
With gold-tipp'd ends, where circles deep,
Around thy neck in harmless grace
So soft and sleekly hold their place,
Might harder hearts with kindness fill,
And gain our right good will.

Each passing clown bestows his blessing,
Thy mouth is worn with old wives' kissing:

E'en lighter looks the gloomy eye
Of surly sense when thou art by;
And yet, I think, whoe'er they be,
They love thee not like me.

Perhaps when time shall add a few
Short months to thee, thou 'lt love me too;
And after that, through life's long way,
Become my sure and cheering stay:
Wilt care for me and be my hold,
When I am weak and old.

Thou 'lt listen to my lengthen'd tale,
And pity me when I am frail* —
— But see! the sweepy swimming fly,
Upon the window takes thine eye.
Go to thy little senseless play;
Thou dost not heed my lay.

Mrs. Baillie takes high rank as a *Lyric* poet. Her Songs and Hymns have singular merit. For conciseness and vigour of expression they stand almost alone amongst the lyrical productions of the period. There is a Scott-like spirit in the following song, from *The Beacon*: —

Up! quit thy bower, late wears the hour;
Long have the rooks caw'd round thy tower;
On flower and tree, loud hums the bee;
The wilding kid sports merrily:

* *Feeble.*

A day so bright, so fresh, so clear,
Shineth when good fortune 's near.

Up! lady fair, and braid thy hair,
And rouse thee in the breezy air;
The lulling stream, that soothed thy dream,
Is dancing in the sunny beam;
And hours so sweet, so bright, so gay,
Will waft good fortune on its way.

Up! time will tell; the friar's bell
Its service sound hath chimëd well;
The aged crone keeps house alone,
And reapers to the field are gone;
The active day so boon and bright,
May bring good fortune ere the night.

As a *sentimental* song-writer Mrs. Baillie is perhaps not so successful. Her style is too intense and terse for this species of composition: and she is apparently deficient in that mere prettiness of fancy which seems essential to a poet of this class. She can, however, at times be very sweetly plaintive, as we may see by the following

SONG.

What voice is this, thou evening gale!
That mingles with thy rising wail;
And as it passes sadly seems
The faint return of youthful dreams?

Though now its strain is wild and drear,
Blythe was it once, as skylark's cheer —
Sweet as the night-bird's sweetest song —
Dear as the lisp of infant's tongue.

It was the voice at whose sweet flow
The heart did beat and cheek did glow,
And lip did smile, and eye did weep,
And motion'd love the measure keep.

Oft be thy sound, soft gale of even,
Thus to my wistful fancy given;
And as I list the swelling strain,
The dead shall seem to live again.

Mrs. Baillie's genius is seen to great advantage in her devotional Poems. Her peculiar compression of thought and strength of style are very effective in this kind of composition. The sense of religion, too, is in her very serene and lofty. The two following hymns seem to me among the best of such productions: —

I.

O God! who mad'st earth, sea, and air,
And living creatures, free and fair,
Thy hallow'd praise is everywhere,
Halleluja!

All blended in the swelling song
Are wise and simple, yeak and strong,
Sweet woman's voice and infant's tongue,
Halleluja!

Yea, woods and winds and waves convey
To the rapt ear a hymn, and say
"He who hath made us we obey,
Halleluja!"

II.

Up! sluggard soul! awake and raise,
To thy blest Lord a song of praise,
Who lifts thee from the gloomy grave
When low on earth thou liest,—
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest!

To Him, thy friend of friends, whose love
Invites thee to a home above,
When thou, the world's poor outcast slave,
In grief and anguish criest,—
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest!

His love a living stream hath found
For pilgrims faint on barren ground,
Their parched and languid souls to lave,
When earthly streams are driest,—
To Him who lived and died to save,
Hosanna in the highest!

In the *Metrical Legends* Mrs. Baillie strongly reminds the reader of Scott. There is, it is true, more reflection and more seriousness in them than in Scott's

poems; but still the likeness is great. Her *Christopher Columbus* is a very spirited, and, withal, very affecting poem: the following passage seems to me exceedingly fine: —

THE GRAVE OF COLUMBUS.

Silence, solemn, awful, deep,
Doth in that hall of death her empire keep;
Save when at times the hollow pavement, smote
By solitary wanderer's foot, amain
From lofty dome and arch and aisle remote,
A circling loud response receives again.
The stranger starts to hear the growing sound,
And sees the blazon'd trophies waving near;
"Ha! tread my feet so near that sacred ground!"
He stops and bows his head: — "Columbus resteth here!"

Some ardent youth, perhaps, ere from his home
He launch his vent'rous bark, will hither come;
Read fondly o'er and o'er his graven name,
With feelings keenly touch'd, — with heart of flame;
Till wrapp'd in fancy's wild delusive dream,
Times past, and long forgotten, present seem;
To his charm'd ear the east-wind rising shrill,
Seems through the Hero's shroud to whistle still.
The clock's deep pendulum swinging, through the blast
Sounds like the rocking of the lofty mast;
While fitful gusts rave like his clam'rous band,
Mix'd with the accents of his high command.
Slowly the stripling quits the pensive scene,
And burns, and sighs, and weeps to be what he has been.

Oh! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
Whilst in that sound there is a charm
The nerves to brace, the heart to warm;
As thinking of the mighty dead,
The young from slothful couch will start,
And vow, with lifted hands outspread,
Like them to act a noble part.

Oh! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
When but for those our mighty dead,
All ages past a blank would be,
Sunk in oblivion's murky bed,
A desert bare, a shipless sea?
They are the distant objects seen,—
The lofty marks of what hath been.

Oh! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name!
When memory of the mighty dead
To earth-worn pilgrims' wistful eye
The brightest rays of cheering shed
That point to immortality?

A twinkling speck, but fix'd and bright,
To guide us through the dreary night,
Each hero shines, and lures the soul
To gain the distant happy goal.
For is there one who musing o'er the grave
Where lies interr'd the good, the wise, the brave,

Can poorly think beneath the mouldering heap,
That noble being shall for ever sleep?
"No!" saith the generous heart, and proudly swells,—
"Though his cered corpse lies here, with GOD his spirit dwells!"

But it is of course by her Plays that Mrs. Baillie will hereafter be chiefly known. To these productions, therefore, we must turn for our best view of her genius.

I quite agree with the opinion expressed by an eminent critic that "no female has ever struck at once into so high a vein of poetry, or obtained so much success, in the noblest and most consummate branch of poetic composition as Mrs. Baillie has done in her Tragic Dramas." The aim, the tone, the style and the moral are alike lofty, fresh, and pure. Intensely natural, the emotions she depicts are yet always free from that familiar *nearness* which makes passion coarse and vulgar. Though casting aside poetical *decorations*, she ever writes in the *spirit* of poetry. She disdains the use of the conventionalisms which weak writers have employed to depict impassioned feeling, and, with the true originality of genius, chooses rather to trace the passions to their sources for herself, and describe them as she finds them.

To acquire a just idea of Mrs. Baillie's merit, we must recollect what was the aspect of dramatic literature when she produced her first volume of plays. The German school was then in full vogue. Kotzebue and his vicious style were on the very pinnacle of

public favour. Rant, fustian, violence, noise and heroics were the chief ingredients of dramatic composition, and passion had become lost in contortion. Great, then, must have been the genius that first saw the deep mistake of this departure from nature: and resolute the spirit that could at once and alone set itself to oppose so strong a tide of error. I see in Mrs. Baillie, therefore, not merely a powerful and successful dramatist, but a great literary reformer: if not the *very* first, at least *amongst* the first, of those who once again placed our poetry under the dominion of nature. She preceded and heralded the school of Wordsworth; and may be safely said to have done more for the restoration of our national drama than any living writer.

It is not necessary to speak much of Mrs. Baillie's Plays as connected with their fitness for theatrical representation. The success which has attended the performance of *The Separation* and *Henriquez* clearly shows that with performers sedulously bent on carrying out the author's design, and willing to sacrifice momentary applause for ultimate appreciation, Mrs. Baillie's Plays would be as forcible in action as they are striking on perusal. But our Stage is too melodramatic for this at present: and possibly the taste of the public too melodramatic also. There is too great a love for blue-fire, and tin-foil, and broadsword-combats as yet: when once this taste for mere show is rendered subservient to the higher effects of moral beauty and fitness, the Plays

on the Passions cannot fail to become popular upon the Stage.

It may be as well to say, however, that all Joanna Baillie's poetical gifts are seen to the greatest advantage in her Plays. Her clear style, energetic diction, and keen direct vision are there quite in place, and contribute very materially to the success which she undoubtedly achieves. It is impossible to dispute the power and dramatic skill of the following scene from *De Monfort.*

[De Monfort is revealing to his sister Jane his hatred of Rezenvelt, which at last hurries him into the crime of murder.]

DE MONFORT.

No more, my sister, urge me not again;
My secret troubles cannot be revealed.
From all participation of its thoughts
My heart recoils: I pray thee be contented.

JANE.

What, must I, like a distant humble friend,
Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturbed,
In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart
I turn aside to weep? O no! De Monfort!
A nobler task thy noble mind will give;
Thy true intrusted friend I still shall be.

DE MONFORT.

Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot e'en to thee.

JANE.

Then fie upon it! fie upon it, Monfort!
There was a time when e'en with murder stain'd,
Had it been possible that such dire deed
Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,
Thou wouldst have told it me.

DE MONFORT.

So would I now — but ask of this no more.
All other trouble but the one I feel
I had disclosed to thee. I pray thee spare me.
It is the secret weakness of my nature.

JANE.

Then secret let it be: I urge no farther.
The eldest of our valiant father's hopes,
So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood,
Like two young trees, whose boughs, in early strength,
Screen the weak saplings of the rising grove,
And brave the storm together —
I have so long, as if by nature's right,
Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been,
I thought through life I should have so remain'd,
Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort,
A humbler station will I take by thee:
The close attendant of thy wandering steps;
The cheerer of this home, by strangers sought:
The soother of those griefs I must not know,
This is mine office now: I ask no more.

DE MONFORT.

Oh Jane! thou dost constrain me with thy love!
Would I could tell it thee!

JANE.

Thou shalt not tell me. Nay, I'll stop mine ears,
Nor from the yearnings of affection wring
What shrinks from utterance. Let it pass, my brother.
I'll stay by thee: I'll cheer thee, comfort thee:
Pursue with thee the study of some art,
Or nobler science, that compels the mind
To steady thought progressive, driving forth
All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies:
Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again,
Like one who from dark visions of the night,
When th' active soul within its lifeless cell
Holds its own world, with dreadful fancy press'd
Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed,
Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses heaven.

DE MONFORT.

It will not pass away: 'twill haunt me still.

JANE.

Ah! say not so, for I will haunt thee too;
And be to it so close an adversary,
That though I wrestle darkling with the fiend,
I shall o'ercome it.

DE MONFORT.

Thou most generous woman!
Why do I treat thee thus? It should not be —
And yet I cannot — O that cursed villain!
He will not let me be the man I would.

JANE.

What say'st thou, Monfort? Oh! what words are these?
They have awaked my soul to dreadful thoughts.
I do beseech thee speak!

[*He shakes his head, and turns from her: she following him.*]

By the affection thou didst ever bear me,
By the dear memory of our infant days;
By kindred living ties, ay, and by those
Who sleep i' the tomb, and cannot call to thee,
I do conjure thee speak.

[*He waves her off with his hand.*]

Ha! wilt thou not?
Then, if affection, most unwearied love,
Tried early, long, and never wanting found,
O'er generous man hath more authority,
More rightful power than crown and sceptre give,
I do command thee.

[*He sinks into a chair, greatly agitated.*]

De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.
Here I entreat thee on my bended knees.

[*Kneeling.*]

Alas! my brother!

[De Monfort *starts up, raises her, and kneels at her feet.*]

DE MONFORT.

Thus let him kneel who should the abased be,
And at thine honoured feet confession make.
I'll tell thee all — but oh! thou wilt despise me.
For in my breast a raging passion burns,
To which thy soul no sympathy will own.

A passion which hath made my nightly couch
A place of torment; and the light of day,
With the gay intercourse of social man,
Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence.
O Jane! thou wilt despise me.

JANE.

Say not so:
I never can despise thee, gentle brother.
A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs
No kindly heart contemns.

DE MONFORT.

A lover, say'st thou?
No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate;
Which thus hath driven me forth from kindred peace,
From social pleasure, from my native home,
To be a sullen wanderer on the earth,
Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd.

JANE.

De Monfort, this is fiendlike, frightful, terrible!
What being, by the Almighty Father formed,
Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,
Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,
Who art thyself his fellow?
Unknit thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands:
Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom mates
To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!
Strive bravely with it: drive it from thy breast:
'Tis the degrader of a noble heart;
Curse it, and bid it part.

DE MONFORT.

It will not part. I've lodged it here too long;
With my first cares I felt its rankling touch,
I loath'd him when a boy.

JANE.

Who didst thou say?

DE MONFORT.

Oh! that detested Rezenvelt!
E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps
Of hostile breed, instinctively averse,
Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his ready pledge,
And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd
From youth to man's estate, his narrow art,
And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd
In the affected carelessness of mirth,
Still more detestable and odious grew.
There is no living being on this earth
Who can conceive the malice of his soul,
With all his gay and damned merriment,
To those, by fortune or by merit plac'd
Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,
He look'd upon the state of prosperous men,
As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,
Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,
I could endure it; even as we bear
The' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,
I could endure it. But when honours came,
And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride;
Whilst flattering knaves did trumpet forth his praise,
And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;

Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!
It drove me frantic. — What! what would I give!
What would I give to crush the bloated toad,
So rankly do I loathe him!

JANE.

And would thy hatred crush the very man
Who gave to thee that life he might have ta'en?
That life which thou so rashly didst expose
To aim at his! oh! this is horrible!

DE MONFORT.

Ha! thou hast heard it, then? From all the world,
But most of all from thee, I thought it hid.

JANE.

I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd
Upon the instant to return to thee.
Didst thou receive my letter?

DE MONFORT.

I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me hither.
I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

JANE.

Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,
I ever left thy house! These few past months,
These absent months, have brought us all this woe.
Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.
And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.
You dar'd him to the field; both bravely fought;
He, more adroit, disarm'd you; courteously

Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,
You did refuse to use against him more;
And then, as says report, you parted friends.

DE MONFORT.

When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worthless hand,
Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
From devilish pride, which now derives a bliss
In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected
With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;
Whilst he securely sits with gibing brow,
And basely baits me, like a muzzled cur
Who cannot turn again.—
Until that day, till that accursed day,
I knew not half the torment of this hell
Which burns within my breast.
Heaven's lightnings blast him!

JANE.

O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!
Lest Heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,
For this most impious wish.

DE MONFORT.

Then let it light.
Torments more fell than I have felt already
It cannot send. To be annihilated —
What all men shrink from — to be dust, be nothing,
Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am.

There is consummate strength and skill, too, in the following passage from the magnificent play of *Henriquez.*

Henriquez, a favourite general of King Alonzo, moved by strong, but, as it turns out, groundless jealousy, kills his friend, Don Juan. A youth named Antonio is seized on suspicion of having committed the murder, and thrown into prison. Henriquez, stung by overpowering remorse, resolves to explain the true facts of the case. The King has at a former time promised to grant him any favour he may ask from him on the production of a certain ring. At the period fixed for the examination of the supposed culprit, Henriquez suddenly appears in the presence-chamber. The scene is wrought with surpassing power.

[*Enter* HENRIQUEZ, *followed by* CARLOS *and* ANTONIO, *the prisoner, fettered and manacled.*]

KING.

Thou, too, my valiant friend, a suitor here?

HENRIQUEZ.

A humble supplicant.

KING.

Who needs not sue.
Say freely what thou would'st, and it is granted.

HENRIQUEZ.

But what I beg, an earnest boon, must be
Confirmed to me with all solemnity
Before I utter it.

KING.

A strange request!
But that thy services have been to me

Beyond all recompense, and that I know
Thy country's welfare and thy sovereign's honour
Are dear to thee, as thou full well hast prov'd,
I should with some precaution give my word;
But be it so: I say thy suit is granted.

HENRIQUEZ.

Nay, swear it on this sword.

KING.

Where doth this tend? Doubt'st thou my royal word?

HENRIQUEZ.

When honoured lately by your princely presence,
You gave to me this ring with words of favour;
And said if I should e'er, by fortune press'd,
Return the same to you, whatever grace
I then might ask should be conceded to me.
[*Giving the ring.*]
Receive your royal token: my request
Is that you swear upon my sword to grant
This boon which I shall beg.
[*Holds sword to the* KING, *who lays his hand upon it.*]

KING.

This sword, this honour'd blade, I know it well;
Which thou in battle from the princely Moor
So valiantly did win: why should I shrink
From any oath that should be sworn on this?
I swear by the fair honour of a soldier,
To grant thy boon, whatever it may be.
Declare it then, Henriquez. [*A pause.*]

Thou art pale
And silent, too. I wait upon thy words.

HENRIQUEZ.

My breath forsook me. 'Tis a passing weakness
I have power now.—There is a criminal,
Whose guilt before your Highness in due form
Shall shortly be attested: and my boon
Is, that your Highness will not pardon him,
However strongly you may be inclined
To royal clemency,— however strongly
Entreated so to do.

KING.

This much amazes me. Ever till now
Thou'st been inclined to mercy, not to blood.

HENRIQUEZ.

Yea, but this criminal, with selfish cruelty,
With black ingratitude, with base disloyalty
To all that sacred is in virtuous ties,
Knitting man's heart to man — What shall I say?
I have no room to breathe
[*Tearing open his doublet with violence.*]
He had a friend,
Ingenuous, faithful, generous and noble:
Even but to look on him had been full warrant
Against the accusing tongue of man or angel,
To all the world beside,—and yet he slew him.
A friend whose fostering love had been the stay,
The guide, the solace of his wayward youth,—
Love steady, tried, unwearied, — yet he slew him.

A friend, who in his best devoted thoughts,
His happiness on earth, his bliss in heaven,
Intwin'd his image, and could nought devise
Of separate good, — and yet he basely slew him;
Rush'd on him like a ruffian in the dark,
And thrust him forth from life, from light, from nature,
Unwitting, unprepared for the awful change
Death brings to all. This act, so foul, so damned,
This he hath done: therefore upon his head
Let fall the law's unmitigated justice!

KING.

And wherefore doubt'st thou that from such a man
I will withhold all grace? Were he my brother
I would not pardon him. Produce your criminal.

[*Attendants lead forward* ANTONIO.]

HENRIQUEZ.

[*Motioning with his hand to forbid them.*]

Undo his shackles,
He is innocent!

KING.

What meaneth this? Produce your criminal.

HENRIQUEZ.

[*Kneeling.*]

My Royal Master,—he is at your feet!

The King endeavours to save Henriquez, but in vain. He persists in dying on the scaffold.

MRS. MARGARET HODSON.

(Formerly Miss Holford.)

THIS lady is the author of *Wallace, or the Fight of Falkirk; Margaret of Anjou;* and some Miscellaneous Verses, which, I believe, have not yet appeared in a collected form. Her poetical writings display a strong, romantic, vigorous genius, lofty and daring in its flight, and essentially firm and healthy in its constitution. She presents a fine contrast to those gossamer Poetesses who have since appeared among us so frequently. Like Mrs. Baillie, she finds that simplicity is the truest strength: and she never exhibits the slightest leaning towards the rhapsodical, the sentimental, or the spasmodic. Clear in thought and intelligible in style, she is one of the most agreeable Poets we possess. Her narratives flow on as gracefully and smoothly as Scott's: she closely resembles that great writer, indeed, in many respects, although as regards dramatic skill she is certainly superior. Her stories are very skilfully conducted, and a strong chain of interest runs through them from the first page to the last. In her spirited descriptions of "broil and battle," few writers in our language surpass her: and one cannot but feel surprised that a lady of our peaceful age should be so thoroughly imbued with the martial spirit of our warlike ancestors. The fact

proves not merely the strength of the human imagination, but also that the imagination is not sexual.

The reader will find ample specimens of Mrs. Hodson's poetical powers in the subjoined extracts.

THE DREAM OF GRÆME.

(*From "Wallace."*)

Wallace in sober mood revolves
High-soaring hopes and deep resolves;
Sees victory gain'd, the day his own,
A native monarch on the throne,—
And hears his much-loved country shed
A thousand blessings on his head!

'T was a gay dream,—the voice of Græme
Dispers'd it, and it fled away,
As fly from morning's ruddy beam
The mists of early day:

As its accents came to Wallace' ear,
They sounded with half their wonted cheer;
And when he rais'd his speaking eye,
It sparkled with half the usual joy;
For who so blithe as the gallant Græme,
When he stood on the edge of the hour of fame!
But now a strange unwelcome guest
O'erclouds his brow, and chills his breast;
His generous heart disdain'd to bear
The ponderous weight of untold care;
Though half asham'd, his lips confess
His fancy's dreary dreams, his bosom's heaviness.

"Wallace, in many a busy hour
We have look'd on death together;
We have seen the fiercest war-clouds lower,
Stood calm 'mid many an iron-shower,
And mock'd the pelting weather;
And smil'd to see our burnish'd mail
Turn the thick storm of arrowy hail;
For still, wherever Wallace trod,
My foot as firmly press'd the sod;
My heart's first boast, my dearest pride,
To stand or fall by Wallace' side!
How wilt thou marvel then to hear,
That gossip tales and baby fear,
Sleep's flimsy shades—night's mockeries,
With magic film delude my eyes,
Till to my heart the future seems
Crowded with sanguine forms, a scene of ghastly dreams.

"Nay, Wallace, smile not on thy friend;
'Tis pressing on a thorn:
Chide, and thy voice shall not offend;
But Græme endures not scorn!

"Of late in great Kincardine's tower,
Subdued by slumber's welcome power,
In willing thrall I lay;
When to my eyes a phantom rose,
Which scar'd the angel of repose,
And fill'd me with dismay:
All shivering, wan, and smear'd with blood
Close to my couch Sir Patrick stood;

His pale, pale cheek and clotted hair,
His hollow eyes' unearthly glare,
Appall'd my senses, from my brow
The beads of fear began to flow;
The phantom shook its gory head —
'Art thou a Græme?' it sternly said;
'Art thou a Græme? and does thine eye
Shrink to behold war's livery?
The Fates, enamour'd of our name,
Loudly demand another Græme;
Thy death-word is pronounc'd on high,
The last of all thy fields is nigh!
Farewell, thy task shall soon be o'er;
We meet ere long, to part no more!'

"I sprang from my couch as the dawn arose,
And thought in my restless mind,
That the grizzly forms of vex'd repose
Would flee from the morning wind;
And I climb'd to the brow of the upland heath,
To taste of the gale the freshest breath;
A cloud was on Craig Rossie's brow,
Dark gloom'd Kincardine's towers below;
And the winding Ruthven's rippling swell
Murmur'd low on mine ear, 'Farewell, farewell!'
Then I thought on thee, and thy loyal tryste,
And I sprang on my berry-brown steed;
That it might not be said that Græme was miss'd
In the hour of Scotland's need;
But still as I rode, I turn'd me round,
To list to the Ruthven's mournful sound,

And thou canst not think how its voice was dear,
When its last faint murmur met mine ear!
For prophetic was my answering sigh
To the stream which I lov'd in infancy!"

ON MEMORY.

Written at Aix-la-Chapelle.

No! this is not the land of Memory,
It is not the home where she dwells;
Though her wandering, wayward votary
Is ever the thrall of her spells.
Far off were the fetters woven which bind
Still closer and closer the Exile's mind.

Yet this land was the boast of minstrelsy,
And the song of the Troubadour;
Where Charlemagne led his chivalry
To the fields which were fought of yore;
Still the eye of Fancy may see them glance,
Gilded banner and quivering lance!

But Memory from Fancy turns away,
She hath wealth of her own to guard;
And whisperings come to her ear which say
Sweeter things than the song of the bard.
They are solemn and low, and none can hear
The whispers which come to Memory's ear!

They tell of the dews that brightened the way
By our earliest footsteps prest;
They tell of the visions hopeful and gay,
Which were born, and which died, in the breast;
They recall the accents which sweetly spake
To the soul, when the soul was first awake.

In Memory's land springs never a flower,
Nor the lowliest daisy blooms;
Ne'er a robin chirps from its russet bower,
But to call from their silent tombs
The thoughts and the things which Time's pitiless sway
Has long since swept from the world away!

In Memory's land waves never a leaf,
There never a summer-breeze blows,
But some long-smother'd thought of joy or grief
Starts up from its long repose:
And forms are living and visible there,
Which vanish'd long since from our earthly sphere!

I would not escape from Memory's land
For all that the eye can view;
For there 's dearer dust in Memory's land
Than the ore of rich Peru.
I clasp the fetters by Memory twin'd,
The wanderer's heart and soul to bind!

Mrs. Hodson's chief work is doubtless the fine poem entitled *Margaret of Anjou*. The fate of this royal lady seems to have called forth the warm sympathy of

her sex; for her career has met with many female historians. None, however, have traced her story so eloquently and graphically as Mrs. Hodson. Her portrait is masterly:

Now who is she, whose awful mien,
Whose dauntless step's firm dignity,
Whose high arch'd brow, sedate, serene,
Whose eye, unbending, strong and keen,
The solemn presence hint of conscious majesty?

* * * *

But she is calm: — a peace profound
On the unruffled surface rests;
Yet is that breast in iron bound,
And fill'd with rude and sullen guests;
No female weakness harbour'd there,
Relentings soft, nor shrinking fear,
Within its centre deep abide:
The stern resolve, the purpose dire,
And grim revenge's quenchless fire,
The intrepid thought, cold, thawless pride,
And fortitude in torture tried, —
These are its gentlest inmates now,
Tho' lawless love, they say, once heard its secret vow.

Very exquisitely does our fair author from time to time cause the beautiful ray of maternal love to light up this dark and gloomy heart. We will take here a brief specimen. When the Queen's son, Prince Edward, after the unsuccessful battle of Hexham, falls fainting at

her feet, overcome with exertion and dispirited by defeat, —

In Margaret's fierce and stormy breast
A thousand warring passions strove;
Yet now, unbid, a stranger-guest
Dispers'd and silenc'd all the rest —
Thy voice, Maternal Love!
Ambition, Hatred, Vengeance wild,
Hot Ire, and frozen Pride were flown,
While gazing on her lifeless child,
On heaven she cried, in frenzied tone,
"Oh, save my gallant boy! oh, Edward! oh, my son!"

The description of the preservation of the fainting Prince by the robbers is given with remarkable spirit.

There is great force in the picture which the poetess gives us of the awe which the queenly Margaret wields over the fierce robber Rudolph.

The bloodhound darting on his prey
Checks when his master bids him stay,
Crouches and cowers at his command,
And licks with gory tongue his hand:
Rudolph, the forest's ruffian child,
As shaggy bloodhound fierce and wild,
Of lion heart and iron frame,
Beneath Queen Margaret's eye was tame,
And by mysterious impulse sway'd,
In unseen fetters held, he listen'd and obey'd!

In the fourth canto of this poem there is a striking episode descriptive of the unwitting slaughter by a

knight of his unrecognised brother. The whole passage is too long for quotation, but I extract a portion of it.

The three children of Lord Edric part on that nobleman's death. Two of them, Sir Gerald and Geraldine, are placed under the charge of a lawless baron, while Edwin, the other son, departs to Spain to offer a relique upon the shrine of St. Jago, pursuant to his deceased mother's injunctions. Gerald and his sister, sorely oppressed by their wicked guardian, fled from their home,

> . . . . and gave
> Their fortunes to the bounding wave.

A storm overtakes them, their vessel founders, and all are lost but Sir Gerald, who is rescued from the waves by a hardy crew of sailors. He is carried to a neighbouring castle, where he is trained to knightly deeds. At length he seeks the field of fame, and fights under the banner of the Red Rose. After describing a disastrous conflict in which he had been engaged, he continues, —

> Stoutly we strove, till hope declined
> In every brave Lancastrian's mind,
> No more to conquer then we fought,
> That thought, that cheering thought was chill'd,
> And now the prize for which we sought
> Was death upon the hostile field!
> Yet ill to strife like this inur'd,
> My manly strength but half matur'd,

And stung with sorrow and disdain
To find we had but striven in vain,
I paus'd a little while to breathe,
And cast a hopeless look around that dismal heath.

While thus I stood, for long before
My steed had dropp'd to rise no more,
A brook's refreshing murmurs stole
Like music o'er my harass'd soul;
I turn'd to seek the cooling tide,
Resolv'd to taste it ere I died;
Alas! commissioned from on high,
That brook entic'd my steps, its voice was destiny!

Just as I gain'd the sparkling flood,
A martial form beside it stood,
Whose towering mien and bearing bold,
A noble soldier's presence told;
"That rill," he said, "to toil and pain
Lends grateful solace! Bright success
May only for a while sustain
Man's feeble spirit! — Weariness
E'en Fortune's minions must confess!
Our task is over!" — I perceiv'd
My badgeless coat his eye deceiv'd;
While, all unwittingly, his tongue
Thus with a victor's boast, a foe's proud bosom stung!

"Thou dost mistake! — One struggle more
Awaits us ere our task is o'er!
Oh! ere yon glorious orb shall set,
One struggle for the Red Rose yet!"

"Alas! young knight," he cried, "methinks
Too much of precious British blood
The mother soil already drinks!
If but hope's shadow linger'd yet
To nerve thine arm and edge thy sword,
I am no recreant, and my word
Should ne'er oppose thy gallant will!"

"What! thinkest thou to see me led
Thy rebel party's scorn and mock,
Meekly to lay my captive head
An offering on your tyrant's block!
Oh no! that felon lot to shun,
I 'll perish with my armour on!"

"Brave youth! be rul'd! Seem but to yield,
Quit thou this blood-stain'd heath with me,
This night my voice shall be thy shield,
To-morrow thou shalt wander free!"

A fatal fire was in my heart,
Lit by the Furies; "From my grasp,"
I cried, "this sword shall ne'er depart
Till I have breath'd life's latest gasp!
And yet, methinks, I too would fain
From slaughter and from toil refrain;
And since to thee it seems not vile
To yield up liberty awhile,
Give me *thy* sword and purchase peace,
And do thou follow me, and let our parley cease!"

His soul was rous'd: "Insulting boy!
I would have spar'd thee! — Heav'n record
How all unwilling to destroy,
Provok'd, I lift the sated sword,
Which to the hilt in slaughter dyed,
Appeas'd, would fain have turn'd aside
And shunn'd the useless homicide!"

We fought: — and tho' the stranger's brand
Seem'd wielded with a veteran's hand,
Tho' all my strokes were spent in air,
Incens'd I saw his skilful care
Was bent his foeman's life to spare:
I paus'd: — "Come on, Sir Knight," I cried,
"By heaven! thou holdest me at bay!
I cannot brook thy scornful pride,
Mock not a man with childish play!"
Again we strove, — a mortal stroke
The stranger's brittle cuirass broke!
Backward he reel'd, and from his side
Impetuous rush'd the boiling tide;
Oh! why do I survive to tell,
The stroke was death! — The stranger fell!

Then, all too late, wrath's wasteful flame
Expir'd extinguish'd and suppress,
And a still voice within my breast
Did greet me with the murderer's name!
The Fury which had urg'd me on,
Forsook me when her work was done.
Now by the fallen warrior's side
I knelt, and gently rais'd his head

From off its cold and bloody bed,
And many a fruitless aid supplied:
And, eager in the futile task,
I flung aside the heavy casque,
And vainly hop'd the evening breath
Would chase away the damps of death!
I met the stranger's lifted eye,
It beamed forgiveness; yet, methought,
With heaven's blue bolt that glance was fraught!
I turn'd me shuddering from his look,
The solid earth beneath me shook,
I shriek'd "My brother!"—Oh! my hand
Was with a brother's life-blood stain'd,
And my accursed sword its noble source had drain'd!

Oh! when my dying brother found
What hand had dealt the fatal wound,
And when he saw the frantic woe
Which tortur'd his unnatural foe,
The hero melting into man
Swift down his cheeks the big drop ran;
"Oh, Gerald! while mine eyes can see,
Oh, quick that envious helm embrace!
Alas! I yearn to look on thee,
And gaze once more upon thy face!
Where is our sister?"—"Drown'd," I cried,
"And would to God my bones lay bleaching by her side!"

There is a passage of extraordinary power in the seventh canto of this Poem. It describes the visit of Margaret and a band of followers to the cave of a sorceress—"The haggard Woman of the Wold." The

mind is excellently prepared for the interview by the description of the scenery: —

All nature sleeping seem'd, or dead;
The air was motionless, — unheard
Or insects' hum, or song of bird,—
And underneath or overhead
No living thing around them stirr'd!
E'en the strange bird, whose circling flight
Still heralds in approaching night,
His task forewent, — nor heavily
The drowsy dorr fled buzzing by:
Still on they trod, — the ghastly light,
Which hither led them, past away, —
Thick rolling clouds obscur'd the night,
And to assist their baffled sight
Not one small star shot forth its ray.

At once upon the darkness burst
A blaze so dazzling that each eye,
Abash'd and baffled, clos'd at first,
Abiding not its brilliancy!
Their senses reel'd,—for every sound
Which the ear loves not, fill'd the air;
Each din that reason might confound
Echoed in ceaseless tumult there!
Swift whirling wheels,—the shriek intense
Of one who dies by violence; —
Yells, hoarse and deep, from bloodhound's throat;
The night-crow's evil-boding note;
Such wild and chattering sounds as throng
Upon the moon-struck idiot's tongue;

The roar of bursting flames, the dash
Of waters wildly swelling round,
Which, unrestrained by dyke or mound,
Leap down at once with hideous crash,—
And sounds without a name,—so drear,
So full of wonder and of fear,
As seldom come to those who walk this middle sphere!

This din unearthly so prevail'd
That e'en the Queen's high spirit fail'd;
With fainting heart, and freezing blood,
And trembling limbs, the Lady stood!
As yet nor she nor Rudolph rais'd
Their eyelids, lest some hideous sight
Might quell their tottering senses quite,
By that dire chorus sore amaz'd:
At once it ceased; for over all
They heard a voice in thunder call
"Silence!" Once, twice, and thrice it cried,
Then all those deafening sounds sank on the ear and died!

* * * *

"If my word has force to bind
The riders of the midnight wind,
If from ocean's weltering wave,
If from the firm earth's midmost cave,
If from that region, cold and dim,
The wintry land of Fiacim,
Where all is still, and frozen sleep
Chains e'en the billows of the deep;
Whether amid the halo pale
Around the wat'ry moon ye sail,

Or ye be they who love to dwell
In some dank cemetery's cell,
And drink the yellow dews that fall
In slow drops from the stained wall,—
If each has felt that word of might
Which quells the disobedient sprite,
And grasps him in his swiftest flight;
If Balkin, and if Luridane,
Strong spirits, tremble in my chain,
And tread my circle,—now let all,
Mute and unseen, attend my call,
And all within, around, and over
The magic ringlet, closely hover!—
Lady, now unclose thine eyes!
Behold! behold our mysteries!"

Now bright, and brighter still, I ween,
The magic tapers blaze!
And with wond'ring heart the dauntless Queen
Beholds how quickly shifts the scene,
Beneath her deep fix'd gaze!

On either side, in double row,
Do massy pillars rise!
Majestic o'er the Lady's brow
The high roof arches! and below
A chequer'd pavement lies!

And hark! for the trumpet brays without,
And the organ peals within!

And louder yet from a festive rout
Echoes the wild triumphant shout,
A joy-proclaiming din!

Now open spreads the ponderous door,
And lo! a princely band,
With golden censers toss'd before,
Come sweeping o'er the chequer'd floor,
Link'd kindly hand in hand!

Now Margaret well her sight may strain,
And doubt if sooth it be,
Or some strange error of the brain
That first, amid that pompous train,
Her haughty self she see!

Oh! scarce might the indignant tide
Within her breast be stay'd,
When by that shadowy Lady's side,
Like gallant bridegroom leading bride,
Earl Warwick she survey'd!

Next Edward comes, of Lancaster
The only hope and pride;
But his cheek was wan and his look was drear,
And a tear-drop dimm'd his eye so clear,
And heavily he sigh'd!

Now wherefore, wherefore sigheth he?
Why wet with tears the hour?
Since smiling by his side, ye see
Of all that noble company
The bright and peerless flow'r!

For by the lily hand he held
Proud Warwick's beauteous heir!
While joy, by fair decorum quell'd,
Within the Lady's bosom swell'd,
His foster'd black despair!

Anon that fair and princely pair
Were link'd in golden chain! —
Then — all the pageant shrank in air,
Nor aught of all that glitter'd there
E'en now, doth now remain!

This does not satisfy the impatient Queen.

She cries, "Oh wondrous woman, more!
Let me Fate's awful page explore!
Leaf after leaf would I unfold,
E'en to the final word! — till *all* the tale be told!"
Scarce had she spoken, when behold
The gloomy night seem'd fled away!
Two mighty armies, fierce and bold,
Await the sign in firm array,
And armour glanc'd, and coursers neigh'd;
And the sun on many a bickering blade
And many a gaudy banner play'd!
On this side rear'd Lancastria's flow'r
Its bright and blushing head;
And high above th' opposing pow'r
Her paler leaf the rival spread!
And, hark! the signal! — Now begin,
Of those who lose and those who win,
The strife, the shout, the mortal din!

Behold! — they meet! — they clash! — they close! —
They mix! — Sworn friends and deadly foes,
In one dire mass, one struggling host,
All order and distinction lost,
Roll headlong, guideless, blind, like waves together toss'd!

But mark the Queen! — the hue of death
Blanches her cheek! — her lab'ring breath,
Her hard clasp'd hands, her blood-shot eye,
Speak nature's utmost agony!
The cold drops on her writhed brow
Her heart's convulsive struggles show,
And — hark! that scream! — scarce can the ear
Its shrill and piercing echo bear!
"Hold! monsters! fiends in human mould!
Oh! stay your bloody hands! remorseless monsters, hold!

"Come, cheer thee! cheer thee, mighty Dame!
These are but toys of airy frame;
Faint shadowings forth of things to be;
Mere mockings of futurity!
But see! — like morning mists they fly,—
See how they melt in vacancy! —
Oh, bid them quit thy mind as they elude thine eye!

"Now, ere our royal guests go hence,
One pageant more our art must show,—
Come, let us stir each mortal sense
Till rage or transport, joy or woe,
In either bosom overflow!
Night wanes apace! — prepare, prepare!
'Tis time, — 'tis time our task were done!

My sprites and I must journey far
Ere the grey dawning shall declare
The coming of the sun!
Prepare!"

With crowned head and ermin'd robe
Grasping the sceptre and the globe,
While a vile rabble's uncheck'd tide
Roll'd after swells his regal pride,
Stalks slowly round the charmed ring,
What seems in act and state a king!
Amid the gems which deck his brow
Triumphant nods the Rose of Snow,
While, crush'd beneath the despot's tread,
The Red Rose droops her blushing head!
What lightnings flash from Margaret's eyes,
While "Long live Richard!" rends the skies!
For he it is, in shapeless frame,
Dark scowl, and halting step, the same,
Before him waves his well-known crest,
That symbol of his soul, the grizzly arctic beast!

In the tenth and last canto, the poet gives us a vivid description of the battle of Tewksbury, into the spirit of which she enters with all the vivacity and energy of a "warrior tried." Margaret's bravery and conduct on the fatal field are most characteristic, and are powerfully drawn. Before the conflict, a priest appeals to the Queen, and prays her to stay the shedding of more English blood, adjuring her by the mandates of religion. Very fine is her reply: —

Oh, holy father! if indeed
To mutter'd prayer, or counted bead,
The distant powers of heaven give heed,
I know not: — But 'tis now too late
By humbleness to conquer fate!
Long since these eyes have done with tears!
Harden'd by many wintry years,
My heart its wrongs unshrinking bears!
My lips have ceas'd to supplicate,
My knees to bend, and I do wait
With resolute and settled soul
Till I have seen, and prov'd the whole!

The battle-scene is too long to be transcribed, and too complete a picture to admit of an extract. I give, therefore, the conclusion of the poem only; descriptive of the death of the two royal prisoners, the Queen and Prince Edward.

In Tewksbury's walls triumphant York
Refresh'd him from his bloody work,
While Gloster, Clarence, Hastings, Grey,
Blythe sharers in th' eventful fray,
Boast o'er the perils of the day;
And they have wash'd their crimson hands,
And sheath'd their weary swords, when lo!
In helpless plight before them stands
The battle's crown,—their royal foe!

* * * *

Alone, defenceless, Edward stood
Encompass'd by these men of blood!

E'en yet a spark of royal pride
Flash'd from his eye, the hectic bloom
Rush'd o'er his features, and defied,
With gallant show, th' impending doom;
Such mournful, stern, majestic grace
Dwells on the ruin'd Prince's face,
That they who hate him, half respect
The virtue by their fury wreck'd!
E'en York deliberates, and surveys
His victim's form with troubled gaze,—
Did he relent? No!—From his breast
He drove in scorn th' intrusive guest,
And then, in thund'ring voice, his captive foe address'd:

"Who art thou, stripling? What impell'd
Thy puny pride to wake the ire
Which has consum'd thee in its fire?
Who taught thy boyish arm to wield
Rebellion's blade? What frantic rage,
What demon was't, who bade thee dare
With fate the desperate fight to wage,
And brave thy sov'reign to the war?
Kneel, stubborn traitor! and confess
What message from below provok'd thee to transgress!"

"Dost thou not know me, York? 'Tis strange
How memory fails with fortune's change!
But I will tell thee,—I am one
To whom thy knee, unbid, should bend;
I came to claim my father's throne,
And my fair birthright to defend,

And with God's favour, to chastise
Mine own and England's enemies!
Now thou art answer'd! — and my tongue
Would do its royal office wrong
To parley with thee more! Thou knowest
Full well, usurping York, to whom that place thou owest!"

Nor needed farther to provoke
Of fell revenge the savage stroke;
York rush'd upon the unarm'd youth
And smote him rudely on the mouth
With mailed hand; — that outrage borne
The rest was easy! Edward's soul,
Rejoicing, from its spoils forlorn,
Escapes to its eternal goal,
And closes with a thankful sigh,
Life's long and lingering tragedy!

* * *

Now from without, a parley rude
Does on their wondering ears intrude:
York shudder'd, — e'en his callous breast
Trembled to meet th' unwelcome guest
Whose voice claim'd entrance! It was she,
She who *was* Queen of England! — late
The people's gaze, the voice of fate,
To whom the loftiest bent his knee!
A fond fallacious hope had led
The mother's frantic footsteps thither,—
She look'd upon the weapons red,
She guess'd what blood their points had shed,
And felt that fond hope wither!

"Then ye have done the deed!" she said:
"I come too late! — Ye might have staid
One moment longer! I would fain
Have kiss'd my living son again,
And whisper'd somewhat in his ear
Ere he began th' unknown career
On which ye sent him! — Hark ye, Lords!
I long to feel those reeking swords!
In mercy kill me! Will ye not?
Ye sons of York, have ye forgot
How many a deep and bitter debt
Ye owe the hated Margaret?
Where is my child? Mine only one!
Oh, God! Oh, God! Is this my son?

"Cold, cold and pale! — Some flatterers said
That heav'n still guards the holy head!
Why this grim heap did late contain
A soul which never crime did stain,
Pure, gentle, innocent! — And yet
Your swords are with his life-blood wet,
And heav'n the while look'd smiling on
Nor aim'd its thunderbolts, when the black deed was done!

"Monsters! A mother's curse lie strong
And heavy on you! May the tongue,
The ceaseless tongue which well I ween
Lives in the murderer's murky breast,
With goading whispers, fell and keen,
Make havoc of your rest!
For ever in your midnight dream
May the wan, wintry smile, which stays

On yon cold lips, appal your gaze,
And many a madden'd mother's scream
Ring in your ears, till ye awake
And every unstrung limb with horror's palsy shake!"

An impulse like the grasp of death
Now hardly held her gasping breath!
Dire was the conflict! Mute she stood,
Striving and fain to utter more,
Her writhing features struggled sore
With black convulsion; till the blood
Burst from her lips, a ghastly flood,
Then Nature gave the combat o'er,
And the heart-stricken Queen fell senseless on the floor!

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

Miss Mitford is, I think, the most thoroughly English of all our Female Poets,—I mean *Saxon*-English. Her verse, like her prose, has the strong, sanguine, cheerful robustness which seems characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon constitution. Miss Mitford's writings always suggest to me golden hair, blue eyes, ruddy cheeks and vigorous limbs: — and her thoughts have a large, full, dimpled, rounded expression which is very healthful and cheerful to look upon. I never read Miss Mitford's Poems without feeling that I have before me a sound, comprehensive, true-seeing, and widely sympathising mind, very just in its views, utterly unaffected in its sentiments, and unwaveringly true in its philosophy: — whilst her mode of expression is marked by a graceful and refreshing simplicity which is very rare in minds so fully stored.

Miss Mitford's poetical works comprise almost every variety of verse, from the simplest to the loftiest; and she displays the same power and excellence in all. There is less inequality in Miss Mitford's writings, wide as is their grasp, than in the productions of almost any other author in the language. You see her whole mind in all she does; and a beautiful, loveable mind it is. Whether the work be Sonnet or Tragedy, Song or

Descriptive Poem; whether the subject be homely or heavenly, rustic or classical; the same strong, unaffected, sympathetic spirit is similarly manifest: and, let her write what she will, she is always in earnest. A Daisy in her garden is the source of as true an emotion as the picture of Jerusalem during the Crucifixion; and her sympathy is as powerfully excited towards the little Forget-me-not "that loves on shadowy banks to lie," as towards the noble Rienzi, or the martyred Charles Stuart.

I subjoin without comment some varied extracts, in order that Miss Mitford's wide range of sympathy may be fairly seen.

I. INFANT LOVE.

(*From Blanch, a Poem.*)

If in this world of breathing harm,
There lurk one universal charm,
One power, which, to no clime confin'd,
Sways either sex and every mind;
Which cheers the monarch on his throne;
The slave beneath the torrid zone;
The soldier rough, the letter'd sage,
And careless youth, and helpless age;
And all that live and breathe and move,—
'T is the pure kiss of infant love!

II. THE MARCH OF MIND.

Fair Nature smiled in all her bowers,
But man, the master-work of God,
Unconscious of his latent powers,
The tangled forest trod.
Without a hope, without an aim
Beyond the sloth's, the tiger's life,
His only pleasure sleep or strife,
And war his only fame.

Furious alike and causeless beam'd
His lasting hate, his transient love:
And e'en the mother's fondness seem'd
The instinct of the dove.
The mental world was wrapp'd in night
Though some, the diamonds of the mine,
Burst through the shrouding gloom to shine
With self-emitted light.

But see the glorious dawn unfold
The brightest day that lurks behind!
The march of armies may be told,
But not the *march of mind.*
Instruction! child of Heaven and earth
As heat expands the vernal flower,
So wisdom, goodness, freedom, power,
From thee derive their birth.

From thee, all mortal bliss we draw;
From thee, Religion's blessed fruit;
From thee, the good of social law,
And man redeem'd from brute.
From thee, all ties to virtue dear,
The father's, brother's, husband's name:
From thee the sweet and holy fame
That never cost a tear.

Oh! breathe thy soul along the gale,
That Britons still, in generous strife,
Knowledge and freedom may inhale,—
The mingled breath of life!
So shall they share what they possess,
And show to distant worlds thy charms:
Wisdom and peace their only arms,
Their only aim to bless.

III. THE VOICE OF PRAISE.

There is a voice of magic power
To charm the old, delight the young —
In lordly hall, in rustic bower,
In every clime, in every tongue;
Howe'er its sweet vibration rung,
In whispers low, in poet's lays,
There lives not one who has not hung
Enraptur'd on the voice of praise.

The timid child, at that soft voice
  Lifts for a moment's space the eye;
It bids the fluttering heart rejoice,
  And stays the step prepar'd to fly:
'T is pleasure breathes that short quick sigh,
And flushes o'er that rosy face;
  Whilst shame and infant modesty
Shrink back with hesitating grace.

The lovely maiden's dimpled cheek
  At that sweet voice still deeper glows;
Her quivering lips in vain would seek,
  To hide the bliss her eyes disclose;
  The charm her sweet confusion shows
Oft springs from some low broken word:
  O Praise! to her how sweetly flows
Thine accent from the lov'd one heard!

The hero, when a people's voice
  Proclaims their darling victor near,
Feels he not then his soul rejoice,
  The shouts of love, of praise, to hear?
  Yes! fame to generous minds is dear —
It pierces to their inmost core;
  He weeps, who never shed a tear;
He trembles, who ne'er shook before.

The poet, too; — ah! well I deem
  Small is the need the tale to tell;
Who knows not that his thought, his dream,
  On thee at noon, at midnight, dwell?

Who knows not that thy magic spell
Can charm his every care away?
In memory, cheer his gloomy cell;
In hope, can lend a deathless day?

'T is sweet to watch Affection's eye:
To mark the tear with love replete;
To feel the softly-breathing sigh,
When Friendship's lips the tones repeat;
But oh! a thousand times more sweet
The praise of those we love to hear!
Like balmy showers in summer heat,
It falls upon the greedy ear.

The lover lulls his rankling wound,
By dwelling on his fair one's name;
The mother listens for the sound
Of her young warrior's growing fame.
Thy voice can soothe the mourning dame
Of her soul's wedded partner riven,
Who cherishes the hallow'd flame,
Parted on earth, to meet in heaven!—

That voice can quiet passion's mood,
Can humble merit raise on high;
And from the wise, and from the good,
It breathes of immortality!
There is a lip, there is an eye
Where most I love to see it shine,
To hear it speak, to feel it sigh,—
My mother! need I say 't is thine!

IV. ON A PICTURE OF JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

Jerusalem! and at the fatal hour!
No need of dull and frivolous question here!
No need of human agents to make clear
The most tremendous act of human power!
The distant cross; the rent and fallen tower;
The opening graves, from which the dead uprear
Their buried forms; the elemental fear,
When horrid light and horrid darkness lower;
All tell the holy tale: the mystery
And solace of our souls. Awe-struck we gaze
On this so mute yet eloquent history!
Awe-struck and sad, at length our eyes we raise
To go:—yet oft return that scene to see,
Too full of the great theme to think of praise.

How varied is the style of these four Poems! We have, first, the simplicity of a child; next a pure and noble intellectuality: then a frank and picturesque burst of moral eloquence; and, lastly, a fine religious bending of the spirit until it seems to become almost speechless with the awe it feels. But for a full view of our fair Poet's powers we must go farther still. I especially refer the reader to the following Poem of

ANTIGONE.

'T was noon; beneath the ardent ray
Proud Thebes in all her glory lay;

On pillar'd porch, on marble wall,
On temple, portico and hall,
The summer sunbeams gaily fall;
Bathing, as in a flood of light,
Each sculptur'd frieze and column bright.
Dirce's pure stream meanders there,
A silver mirror clear and fair;
Now giving back the deep-blue sky,
And now the city proud and high,
And now the sacred grove;
And sometimes on its wave a shade,
Making the light more lovely, play'd,
When some close-brooding dove
Flew from her nest, on rapid wing,
For needful food across the spring,
Or sought her home of love.
The very air in that calm hour,
Seem'd trembling with the conscious power
Of its own balminess;
The herbage, if by light foot press'd,
Sent up sweet odours from its breast; —
Sure, if coy happiness
E'er dwelt on earth, 't was in that clime
Of beauty, in that noon-day prime
Of thrilling pleasantness!

But who are they before the gate
Of Thebes conven'd in silent state?
Sad, grey-hair'd men, with looks bow'd down,
Slaves to a tyrant's haughty frown;
And he the wicked king, and she
The royal maid Antigone,

Passing to death. Awhile she laid
Her clasp'd hands on her heart, and stay'd
Her firmer step, as if to look
On the fair world which she forsook;
And then the sunbeams on her face
Fell, as on sculptur'd Nymph or Grace,
Lighting her features with a glow
That seemed to mock their patient woe.

She stay'd her onward step, and stood
A moment's space; — oh, what a flood
Of recollected anguish stole
In that brief moment o'er her soul!
The concentrated grief of years,
The mystery, horror, guilt and tears,
The story of her life past by,
E'en in the heaving of a sigh!

She thought upon the blissful hour
Of infancy, when, as a flower
Set in the sun, she grew,
Without a fear, without a care,
Enjoying, innocent and fair,
As buoyant as the mountain air,
As pure as morning dew;
'Till burst at once like lightning's flame,
The tale we tremble but to name,
Of them from whom her being came,
Poor Œdipus, and one,
The wretched yet unconscious dame,
Who wedded with her son!

Then horror fast on horror rose:
She maddening died beneath her woes,
Whilst crownless, sightless, hopeless, *he*
Dared to outlive that agony.
Through many a trackless path and wild
The blind man and his duteous child
Wandered, 'till pitying Theseus gave
The shelter brief, the mystic grave,
One weary heart finds rest at last:
But, when to Thebes the maiden pass'd,
The god's stern wrath was there:—
Her brothers each by other slain,
And one upon the bloody plain
Left festering in the sun and rain,
Tainting the very air:
For none, the haughty Creon said,
On pain of death should yield the dead
Burial, or tear, or sigh;
And, for alone she feebly strove
To pay the decent rites of love,
The pious maid must die.

She paus'd — and in that moment rose
As in a mirror all her woes;
She spake — the flush across her cheek
Told of the woe she would not speak,
As a brief thought of Hæmon stole
With bitter love across her soul.
"I die,— and what is death to me
But freedom from long misery?
Joyful to fall before my time,
I die; and, tyrant, hear my crime:

I did but strive his limbs to shield
From the gaunt prowlers of the field;
I did but weave, as nature weaves,
A shroud of grass and moss and leaves;
I did but scatter dust to dust,
As the desert wind on marble bust;
I did but as the patient wren
And the kind redbreast do for men.
I die—and what is death to me?
But tremble in thy tyranny,
Tyrant! and ye, base slaves of power,
Tremble at freedom's coming hour!
I die—and death is bliss to me!"
Then, with a step erect and free,
With brow upraised and even breath,
The royal virgin passed to death.

Nothing, I think, can exceed the pure taste which characterises this exquisite poem. Nowhere is a classical story more classically treated. The spirit of the poem is wholly Greek. Yet it has a charm which is more than classical. There is a *life* in it which we rarely find in the classical models. To the statuesque Miss Mitford adds the picturesque; to correctness of form she adds beauty of colour; to chasteness of design she adds beauty of expression. The foregoing poem amply illustrates these assertions. How beautifully Thebes is pictured to form the background of the scene! And how the whole description is made instinct with moving life, as the

——"close brooding dove,
Flies from her nest, on rapid wing,
For needful food across the spring."

It is in passages like this that Miss Mitford's strength is best seen: and they abound in every page of her poetry.

It has been said that purity of sentiment will always produce purity of style. Miss Mitford's compositions certainly bear out the assertion. I offer the following sweetly-expressed Sonnet in proof: I might select any our poetess has written, for the same purpose.

TO MY MOTHER SLEEPING.

Sleep on, my mother! sweet and innocent dreams
Attend thee, best and dearest! Dreams that gild
Life's clouds like setting suns, with pleasure filled,
And saintly joy, such as thy mind beseems,—
Thy mind where never stormy passion gleams,
Where their soft nest the dovelike virtues build
And calmest thoughts, like violets distill'd,
Their fragrance mingle with bright wisdom's beams.
Sleep on, my mother! not the lily's bell
So sweet; not the enamour'd west-wind's sighs
That shake the dew-drop from her snowy cell
So gentle; not that dew-drop ere it flies
So pure. E'en slumber loves with thee to dwell,
Oh, model most beloved of good and wise.

No reader of "Our Village" can have failed to notice the countless dramatic touches which those delightful

prose sketches exhibit: no reader will therefore quarrel with me for saying that Miss Mitford's genius is essentially of a dramatic kind. The picturesqueness of her style, the universality of her sympathies, and the perspicacity of her mental vision, all tend to make her a dramatist. And a very powerful dramatist she proves herself. No one who reads her volume of *Dramatic Scenes* can doubt my assertion. These scenes display not merely a large measure of the creative faculty which results in the invention of striking incidents and effective situations, but the existence in a high degree of that *individualising* faculty which selects, animates, and sustains human character, which surrounds the fictitious creation of the stage with real human interest, and which makes each person on the scene a separate, complete, and consistent being. Besides this, Miss Mitford exhibits that spiritualising faculty which alone elevates Drama into Poetry. She always avoids harsh outline and too-literal fact, and she gives her creations an air of remoteness which effectually preserves them from ever degenerating into common-place. She embellishes her scenes, too, with such sweet flowers of fancy, that our very taste is moralised by her, and our conception detached from all that is gross, vulgar, and sensual.

So many fine passages in illustration of these remarks crowd upon my memory that I find the greatest difficulty in selecting a specimen. *Cunigunda's Vow*, in which a proud heart is proudly punished, *The Painter's*

Daughter, the death of *Fair Rosamond*, *The Bridal Eve*, *The Captive*, all claim a place, whilst I have scarcely space for one of them. But as I am obliged to resolve, I choose

THE MASQUE OF THE SEASONS.

GIACOMO.

Where is Fiesco now?

ISABELLA.

Oh, you should see him!
Celia is showing him her gay saloon
Sparkling with lamps and flowers, and her quaint masque
Of country lasses, cunningly prankt out
With rustic fancy. The little thief
Hath stolen all my roses — all save this —
To deck the pretty damsel she calls Spring,
And there is she turning them round and round
To be admired; and there are they, all blushes,
Curtsying with coy and shamefaced bashfulness,
Yet full of a strange joy; and there is he,
Dropping kind words and kinder smiles about,
Delighting and delighted. We must join them.

THE MASQUE.

Enter SPRING.

SPRING.

Room for the jocund queen of new-born flowers!
Bathed in light fragrant airs and sunny showers

I come. Beneath my steps the grass is set
With violets, cowslips, daffodils, all wet
With freshest dew as any crystal clear.
The youth, the smile, the music of the year
Am I. Who loves not Spring? Gay songs of birds
Tell my delights, and rough uncouthest words
Of shepherds. Fairest ladies, here are posies
Of crisp curled hyacinths, pale maiden roses,
And bright anemonies of richer dyes
Than rubies, amethysts, or azure eyes
Of sapphires. Summer! hasten, leafy queen!
And Autumn help to bind my garlands sheen!

Enter SUMMER.

SUMMER.

In a green nook, whose mossy bed receives
Shade from my own unnumbered world of leaves,
I heard a voice called Summer.

SPRING.

Hast thou not
Brought flowery tribute? To thy favourite grot
I sent my deftist, trustiest messenger,
A dappled butterfly, whose pinions whir
Like thy mailed beetle's. He was charg'd to say
That great Doria would be here to-day —
Did not that rouse thee?

SUMMER.

Yes! his name hath won
To my deep solitudes, where scarce the sun

Can pierce the heavy umbrage. The cool places
To which the sweltering noon the wild deer chases;
The shelter'd pools, which oft the swallow's winglet
Skims, or where lazily her darker ringlet
Some Naiad floating in her beauty laves;
The little bubbling springs, whose tiny waves
Do murmur gently round old pollard trees,
Mingling their music with the stir of bees;
All these are mine: mine the wild forest glade
Where the bright sun comes flickering through the shade,
Gilding the turfy wood-walks; and his name
Is wafted through them with an odorous fame,
Balm breathing. Take my tribute. Strawberries bred
In shrubby dingles: cherries round and red,
And flowers that love the sun.

SPRING.

Sweet flowers are thine,
Carnation, pink, acacia, jessamine,
With coral-budded myrtle, which discloses
White pearly blossoms, and perfumed musk roses.

Enter AUTUMN.

AUTUMN.

Fair queen of leaves and flowers, give way to me,
To Autumn and his fruits. Do you not see
How I am laden? Corn and grapes are here
And olives. Of the riches of the year
I am the joyful gatherer. Merry nights
Have I at harvest-time, and rare delights

When the brown vintagers beneath the trees
Dance, and drink in the sunset and the breeze.
And I have brought young tendrils of the vine
Amidst your gayer garlands to entwine
For great Doria.

Enter WINTER.

SPRING.

Ah! what form is this?
Stern Winter, hence! Come not to mar our bliss
With frosts and tempests. Icy season, hence!
See, Summer sickens at thy influence,
And I can feel my coronet withering.

WINTER.

Hence then, thyself, fair, dainty, delicate thing!
Light fluttering playmate of the infant loves,
Mistress of butterflies and turtle-doves,
Hence! and bear with thee that gay blooming toy,
To a fair girl from an enamoured boy
Fit homage, not for heroes. In this form
Thou hail'st a friend, Doria! The wild storm,
The raging of the elements, the wave
That Winter flings aloft, are to the brave
A victory and a glory. Thou hast breasted
My billows, mountain-high and foamy-crested,
And vanquished them. And I can guerdon thee,
I, barren Winter, from the unfading tree
To valour consecrate. This laurel crown
Wear! as it clips thy temples, thy renown

Will cast upon its shining leaves a light
Ineffable. Approach, ye Seasons bright,
With gifts and garlands; let us offer here
The blended homage of the circling year.

Some exquisite snatches of song, sometimes of Shaksperean character, occur occasionally in the Dramatic Scenes. One of them I transcribe.

BRIDAL SONG.

Forth the lovely bride ye bring;
Gayest flowers before her fling,
From your high-piled baskets spread,
Maidens of the fairy tread!
Strew them far, and wide, and high,
A rosy shower 'twixt earth and sky!
Strew about! Strew about!
Bright jonquil, in golden pride,
Fair carnation, freak'd and dyed,
Strew about! Strew about!
Dark-eyed pinks, with fringes light,
Rich geraniums, clustering bright,
Strew about! Strew about!
Flaunting pea, and harebell blue,
And damask-rose of deepest hue,
And purest lilies, maidens, strew!
Strew about! Strew about!
Home the lovely bride ye bring:
Choicest flowers before her fling,
Till dizzying streams of rich perfume
Fill the lofty banquet-room!

Strew the tender citron there,
The crushed magnolia proud and rare,
Strew about! Strew about!
Orange blossoms, newly dropp'd,
Chains from high acacia cropp'd,
Strew about! Strew about!
Pale musk-rose, so light and fine,
Cloves, and stars of jessamine,
Strew about! Strew about!
Tops of myrtle, wet with dew,
Nipp'd where the leaflets sprout anew,
Fragrant bay-leaves, maidens, strew!
Strew about! Strew about!

But to gain a just appreciation of Miss Mitford's dramatic genius, we must go to her Plays. It is in them that she puts forth all her strength, and it will doubtless be by them that posterity will mainly judge her. *Julian, Rienzi, Charles the First,* and *The Vespers of Palermo,* are the names of her Plays: and all of them display more or less the dramatic qualities which I have heretofore attributed to her. *Charles the First* and *Rienzi* are the two which have taken the strongest hold of the public mind; and I see no reason to dispute the verdict. Both are noble plays — full of poetry and characterisation. I take, however, one of them only for my illustrations. It shall be *Rienzi.*

There could not well be a more dramatic story than that of Rienzi. The dazzling and strange career of "The Last of the Tribunes" presents more than most histories those strong and startling points of interest

which contribute so materially to dramatic success. The time, the place, the men, the events, all attract and fasten the attention. The scene is Rome: the subject Liberty: the passions addressed are amongst the intensest that belong to human nature. All these concurrent circumstances no doubt contributed materially to Miss Mitford's success: but still there seems to me no question that the story owes more to her than she to the story. Some of the chief dramatic faculties are displayed by the fair author of this work in a remarkable degree. There is great constructiveness in it: the piece is extremely well put together: the occurrences happen naturally and truthfully. The main points are most judiciously kept in view throughout, and the minor ones duly subordinated. There is a consistency, too, a coherency in the Play, which is essentially dramatic. There is no flying off at a tangent; no forgetting the great object in view, even for a moment. The characters are brought upon the scene easily and naturally: and they speak not at all like automata, but like men and women of actual flesh and blood. The passions displayed in the Tragedy are, moreover, most correctly and affectingly delineated: there is not a syllable of false feeling or unreal sentiment in the whole composition. Besides this, there is an amazing range of sympathy shown by the writer. The proud, ambitious, fiery Rienzi, the gentle and innocent Claudia, the brave but indecisive and haughty Angelo, the revengeful Lady Colonna, and the fierce Ursini, are all so powerfully and sympathetically portrayed, that the mind of the author must have

inhabited for a time the soul of each, and must have really felt as they are made to feel. The mere composition, too, is eminently dramatic in its character. It is terse, vigorous, and suggestive. The writer never forgets that she is *depicting*, not *describing*.

Here is the portrait of Rienzi: there is absolute, moving, speaking *life* in it. Lady Colonna calls him

A sad, wise man, of daring eye and free
Yet mystic speech. While others laugh'd, I still
Have shudder'd, for his darkling words oft fell
Like oracles, answering with dim response
To my unspoken thoughts, so that my spirit,
Albeit unus'd to womanish fear, hath quail'd
To hear his voice's deep vibration. Watch him!
Be sure he is ambitious. Watch him, lords!

To complete the picture, here are touches by his daughter, Claudia.

Alas! I 've learned to fear him: — he is chang'd,
Grievously chang'd: still good and kind, but full
Of fond relentings — cross'd by sudden gusts
Of wild and stormy passion. Then he 's so silent: —
He once was eloquent. Now he sits mute,
His serious eyes bent on the ground: — each sense
Turn'd inward.

A dangerous man, this, one would say, in a wicked state! — especially when he begins to talk about

——"the will of man, the hallow'd names
Of Freedom and of Country."

But let us listen to him. He is speaking to the Romans of their wrongs: — incited by wrongs of his own.

Friends,
I come not here to talk. Ye know too well
The story of our thraldom. We are slaves!
The bright sun rises to his course, and lights
A race of slaves! — He sets, and his last beam
Falls on a slave. Not such as swept along
By the full tide of power the conqueror leads
To crimson glory and undying fame —
But base ignoble slaves, slaves to a horde
Of petty despots, feudal tyrants: — lords
Rich in some dozen paltry villages,
Strong in some hundred spearmen, only great
In that strange spell, a name. Each hour dark fraud
Or open rapine, or protected murder,
Cry out against them. But this very day
An honest man, my neighbour — there he stands —
Was struck — struck like a dog, by one who wore
The badge of Ursini, because forsooth,
He toss'd not high his ready cap in air,
Nor lifted up his voice in servile shouts,
At sight of that great ruffian. Be we men,
And suffer such dishonour? Men, and wash not
The stain away in blood? Such shames are common:
I have known deeper wrongs. I that speak to ye.
I had a brother once, a gracious boy,
Full of all gentleness, of calmest hope,
Of sweet and quiet joy. Oh how I lov'd
That gracious boy! Younger by fifteen years,

Brother at once and son! He left my side;
A summer-bloom on his fair cheeks, a smile
Parting his innocent lips. In one short hour
The pretty harmless boy was slain! I saw
His corse, his mangled corse; and when I cried
For vengeance — Rouse ye, Romans! rouse ye, slaves!
Have ye brave sons? Look in the next fierce brawl
To see them die. Have ye fair daughters? Look
Ye to see them live, torn from your arms; distained,
Dishonor'd; and if ye dare to call for justice,
Be answer'd with — the lash! Yet this is Rome,
That sat on her seven hills, and from her throne
Of beauty rul'd the world! And we are Romans!
Why in that elder day to be a Roman
Was greater than a king! And once again —
Here me, ye walls that echoed to the tread
Of either Brutus! Once again, I swear,
The eternal city shall be free! Her sons
Shall walk with princes!

Very consistent is the bearing of Rienzi when lifted to the height of power. True to his nature, his ambition has *grown* in him, and is become selfish and infatuating. Still his great spirit remains true and noble. His sway must be just, however despotic. Lordly fraud swings on the same gibbet with plebeian theft: there is no partial hand interposed for either. Though the head of the Ursini is the offender, he must hang with the rest of the criminals. The scene wherein Rienzi refuses mercy to the patrician culprit is a very fine and characteristic one.

[The Nobles are come to intercede with *Rienzi* for *Ursini*. *Colonna* begins.]

COLONNA.

Sir, I come
A suitor to thee. Martin Ursini —

RIENZI.

When last his name was on thy lips — Well, Sir,
Thy suit, thy suit? If *pardon*, take at once
My answer. — No!

ANGELO.

Yet, mercy —

RIENZI.

Angelo,
Waste not thy pleadings on a desperate cause,
And a resolvëd spirit. My Lord Colonna,
This is a needful justice.

COLONNA.

Noble Tribune,
It is a crime which custom —

RIENZI.

Aye, the law
Of the strong against the weak, — *your* law, the law
Of the sword and spear. But, gentles, now ye live
Under the good estate.

SAVELLI.

He is noble!

RIENZI.

Therefore
A thousand times, he dies. Ye are noble, Sirs,
And need a warning.

COLONNA.

Sick, almost to death.

RIENZI.

Ye have less cause to grieve.

FRANGIPANI.

New wedded.

RIENZI.

Aye,
Madonna Laura is a blooming dame,
And will become her weeds.

CAFARELLO.

Remember, Tribune,
He hath two uncles, cardinals. Would'st outrage
The sacred College?

RIENZI.

The Lord Cardinals,
Meek, pious, lowly men, and loving virtue,
Will render thanks to him who wipes a blot
So flagrant from their name!

COLONNA.

An Ursini,
Head of the Ursini!

JOHN OF URSINI.

My brother!

RIENZI.

And dar'st *thou* talk to me of *brothers?* Thou,
Whose groom — Would'st have me break my own just laws
To save thy brother? *Thine!* Hast thou forgotten
When that most beautiful and blameless boy,
The prettiest piece of innocence that ever
Breath'd in this sinful world, lay at thy feet,
Slain by thy pamper'd minion, and I knelt
Before thee for redress, — whilst thou — Didst never
Hear talk of *retribution?* This is justice —
Pure justice, not revenge! mark well, my Lords,
Pure equal justice. Martin Ursini
Had open trial, is guilty, is condemn'd,
And he shall die!

COLONNA.

Yet listen to us —

RIENZI.

Lords,
If ye could range before me all the peers,
Prelates, and potentates of Christendom,
The holy Pontiff kneeling at my knee,
And emperors crouching at my feet, to sue
For this great robber, still I should be blind
As Justice. But this very day a wife,
One infant hanging at her breast, and two,

Scarce bigger, first-born twins of misery,
Clinging to the poor rags that scarcely hid
Her squalid form, grasped at my bridle-rein
To beg her husband's life, condemn'd to die
For some vile petty theft, some paltry scudi:
And whilst the fiery war-horse chaf'd and rear'd,
Shaking his crest and plunging to get free,
There 'midst the dangerous coil unmov'd she stood,
Pleading in broken words, and piercing shrieks,
And hoarse low shivering sobs, the very cry
Of Nature. And when I at last said No,—
For I said No to her — she flung herself
And those poor innocent babes between the stones
And my hot Arab's hoofs. We sav'd them all,
Thank Heaven we sav'd them all! But I said No
To that sad woman midst her shrieks. Ye dare not
Ask me for mercy-now!

All this is in the highest degree dramatic, and most truly fitted to the character of the man who utters it.

In his zenith of triumph, Rienzi is Rienzi still. The ambitious, unquiet spirit can find no rest, even when most successful. We see that now

He bears him like a prince, save that he lacks
The port serene of majesty. His mood
Is fitful: stately now, and sad; anon,
Full of a hurried mirth; courteous awhile,
And mild: — then bursting, on a sudden, forth,
Into sharp biting taunts.

But the intoxication of ambition increases in him;

—— "his new power
Mounts to his brain like wine: —"

He becomes reckless, hated, despised, deserted by those who raised him to his giddying elevation. Rebellion, turmoil, riot, meet him at every turn; until at last his awakened spirit sees the vanity of the dream in which he has indulged.

"For this," (he cries) I left
The assur'd condition of my lowliness,—
The laughing days, the peaceful nights, the joys,
Of my small quiet home; for such I risk'd
Thy peace, my daughter! O had I laid
All earthly passion, pride, and pomp, and power,
And high ambition and hot lust of rule,
Like sacrificial fruits upon the altar
Of Liberty, divinest Liberty! —
Then — but the dream that fill'd my soul was vast
As his whose mad ambition thinn'd the ranks
Of the seraphim, and peopled hell!

And so he falls — like a star from the sky — into the blackness of darkness. Oh, ambition!

By that sin fell the angels — how shall man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to profit by 't?

Thy dream is a sick and a vain one, and thy waking is to misery and the tomb. "Madness is in thee, and Death — thy end is Bedlam and the Grave."

MARY HOWITT,

THE poetess alike of the Fireside and of the Field, and perhaps the most popular of all our female writers, takes a rank second to none among the fair poets of our country. Not less harmonious and graceful than Mrs. Hemans, she is infinitely more spirited, natural, and powerful; and whilst her sympathies are possibly less subtle and sentimental than those of the lady referred to, they are much more strong, more extended, and more human. She feels equally for creation, but more for humanity. She writes with a more direct and earnest purpose, too, than Mrs. Hemans does: Mrs. Hemans delights, Mrs. Howitt instructs us. In a word, I find in Mrs. Hemans *music;* in Mrs. Howitt musical *speech.*

In force and character of style, and in bold nervousness of thought, Mrs. Howitt may challenge comparison with most writers in our literature. There is a strength approaching to massiveness in the following noble sonnets on

TYRE.

I.

In thought I saw the palace domes of Tyre:
The gorgeous treasures of her merchandize;
All her proud people in their brave attire,
Thronging her streets for sport or sacrifice.

I saw her precious stones and spiceries;
The singing-girl, with flower-wreathed instrument;
And slaves whose beauty ask'd a monarch's price:
Forth from all lands all nations to her went,
And kings to her on embassy were sent.
I saw with gilded prow and silken sail,
Her ships that of the sea had government.
O gallant ships, 'gainst you what might prevail!
She stood upon her rock, and in her pride
Of strength and beauty, waste and woe defied.

II.

I looked again — I saw a lonely shore;
A rock amid the waters, and a waste
Of trackless sand: I heard the bleak sea's roar,
And winds that rose and fell with gusty haste.
There was one scathëd tree, by storm defaced,
Round which the sea-birds wheeled with screaming cry.
Ere long came on a traveller, slowly paced:
Now east, then west, he turn'd with curious eye,
Like one perplexed with an uncertainty.
Awhile he looked upon the sea,—and then
Upon a book as if it might supply
The thing he lack'd: —he read and gazed again —
Yet as if unbelief so on him wrought,
He might not deem this shore the shore he sought.

III.

Again I saw him come: —'t was eventide;
The sun shone on the rock amid the sea;
The winds were hush'd: —the quiet billows sighed
With a low swell: — the birds winged silently

Their evening flight around the scathëd tree;
The fisher safely put into the bay
And push'd his boat ashore; then gathered he
His nets, and hastening up the rocky way,
Spread them to catch the sun's warm evening ray.
I saw that stranger's eye gaze on the scene:
"And this was Tyre,"— said he: how has decay
Within her palaces a despot been.
Ruin and silence in her courts have met,
And on the city rock the fisher spreads his net.

Not content with showing that she possesses noble powers, Mrs. Howitt exhibits the rare ambition of using her gifts nobly: and, with an earnest eloquence, which often reaches sublimity, she proclaims herself the poet of the Young and the Humble and the Poor. Her sympathies with all classes are strong,

—— "all tears
Which human sorrow sheds are dear to her;"

but with these classes they are overpowering. Childhood has for her an inexpressible charm: a reminiscence of childhood takes precedence of everything besides. We see this in her lines respecting Smyrna.

"Of Smyrna nought I know,
Except that Homer was *a child*
In Smyrna long ago:"

indeed the sentiment is ever uppermost in her poetry: and never is it more graceful and beautiful than when

allied to her delicate womanly sympathy for the poor. Take the following, for instance: —

My heart o'erfloweth to mine eyes,
And a prayer is on my tongue,
When I see the poor man's children,
The toiling, though the young,
Gathering with sunburnt hands
The dusty wayside flowers!
Alas! that pastime symbolleth
Life's after, darker, hours!

And how eloquently and touchingly she pleads for the children of the poor. I find the finest possible oratory in the subjoined beautiful extract from her *Lyrics of Life*—(*The Second Series*, now publishing in HOWITT'S JOURNAL).

THE CHILDREN.

Beautiful the children's faces!
Spite of all that mars and sears:
To my inmost heart appealing;
Calling forth love's tenderest feeling;
Steeping all my soul with tears.

Eloquent the children's faces —
Poverty's lean look, which saith,
Save us! save us! woe surrounds us;
Little knowledge sore confounds us:
Life is but a lingering death!

Give us light amid our darkness;
Let us know the good from ill;
Hate us not for all our blindness;
Love us, lead us, show us kindness—
You can make us what you will.

We are willing; we are ready;
We would learn, if you would teach;
We have hearts that yearn towards duty;
We have minds alive to beauty;
Souls that any heights can reach!

Raise us by your Christian knowledge:
Consecrate to man our powers;
Let us take our proper station;
We, the rising generation,
Let us stamp the age as ours!

We shall be what you will make us:—
Make us wise, and make us good!
Make us strong for time of trial;
Teach us temperance, self-denial,
Patience, kindness, fortitude!

Look into our childish faces;
See ye not our willing hearts?
Only love us, only lead us;
Only let us know you need us,
And we all will do our parts.

We are thousands, many thousands!
Every day our ranks increase;
Let us march beneath your banner,
We, the legion of true honour,
Combating for love and peace!

Train us! try us! days slide onward,
They can ne'er be ours again:
Save us, save! from our undoing!
Save from ignorance and ruin;
Make us worthy to be MEN!

Send us to our weeping mothers,
Angel-stamped in heart and brow!
We may be our father's teachers:
We may be the mightiest preachers,
In the day that dawneth now!

Such the children's mute appealing,
All my inmost soul was stirred;
And my heart was bowed with sadness,
When a cry, like summer's gladness,
Said, "The children's prayer is heard!"

There is a line in the preface to Mrs. Howitt's Ballads, which very happily describes her: the line that speaks of her "love for *flowers*, and *Christ*, and *little children*;" Beauty, Humility, and Dependence. Her sense of beauty is truly exquisite. It is not the soft semi-voluptuous, undefined sentiment of Mrs. Hemans, nor the rich, showy, brilliant conception of Miss

Landon: but a clear, honest, happy, grateful appreciation of what is harmonious and loveable and elevating. There is nothing dreamy in her idea of beauty. It is a real existence: something that may be clasped to the heart, and felt, and transmitted. She says —

> Make beauty a familiar guest,
> So shalt thou elevate thy mind!
> And let their glorious names be bless'd,
> Who leave one thought of grace behind,
> Be it in form or word express'd,
> For such are benefactors of mankind!

Equally fine is her sympathy with lowliness. Anything that is humble, or dependent, or patient, or uncomplaining, or enduring, has a charm which attracts the whole intellect and heart of Mrs. Howitt at once. And such sympathies proclaim her to be the possessor of one of those true, earnest, loving souls which alone (humanly speaking) can save us from sinking into that yawning gulf of pride and selfishness which now threatens to devour and close over all that is noble and self-denying in the heart of man. We need to be more *child*like: and to be this we want writers who see with the true eyes, and speak with the fearless souls of children. This our author does. With one single exception (Jane Taylor) Mary Howitt has written more charmingly *for* children and *of* children, than any writer of poetry in our language. And whilst in all respects she is equal, in one respect she is far superior to the exception

named: the information she conveys is of a higher and more solid order. In her volume entitled *Birds and Flowers*, there is a large amount of positive instruction: and most delightfully it is conveyed to the mind of the youthful reader; not merely inculcating facts, but inducting sympathies: not merely fastening the young mind on intellectual Knowledge, but fixing it deeply in the rock of moral Truth. Her style contains everything that can attract the young imagination; fervour, simplicity, harmony, affectionateness, and pictorial power. Take the following lines: —

BIRDS IN SUMMER.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in each leafy tree;
In the leafy trees, so broad and tall,
Like a green and beautiful palace hall;
With its airy chambers, light and boon,
That open to sun and stars and moon,
That open unto the bright blue sky,
And the frolicsome winds as they wander by.

They have left their nests in the forest bough,
Those homes of delight they need not now;
And the young and the old they wander out,
And traverse their green world round about:
And hark! at the top of this leafy hall,
How one to the other they lovingly call;
"Come up, come up!" they seem to say,
"Where the topmost twigs in the breezes sway!"

"Come up, come up, for the world is fair,
Where the merry leaves dance in the summer air!"
And the birds below give back the cry,
"We come, we come, to the branches high!"
How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Flitting about in a leafy tree;
And away through the air what joy to go,
And to look on the green bright earth below.

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Skimming about on the breezy sea;
Cresting the billows like silvery foam,
And then wheeling away to its cliff-built home!
What joy it must be, to sail, upborne
By a strong free wing, through the rosy morn,
To meet the young sun face to face,
And pierce like a shaft the boundless space!

How pleasant the life of a bird must be,
Wherever it listeth, there to flee;
To go when a joyful fancy calls
Dashing adown 'mong the waterfalls;
Then wheeling about with its mates at play,
Above and below, and among the spray,
Hither and hither, with screams as wild
As the laughing mirth of a rosy child!

What joy it must be, like a living breeze,
To flutter about 'mong the flowering trees;
Lightly to soar, and to see beneath
The wastes of the blossoming purple heath,

And the yellow furze, like fields of gold,
That gladden some fairy region old!
On mountain tops, on the billowy sea,
On the leafy stems of the forest tree,
How pleasant the life of a bird must be!

I quote next a little Poem full of sweet, simple tenderness, quite characteristic of Mrs. Howitt, and entitled

MOUNTAIN CHILDREN.

Dwellers by lake and hill!
Merry companions of the bird and bee!
Go, gladly forth, and drink of joy your fill,
With unconstrainëd step, and spirits free!

No crowd impedes your way,
No city wall impedes your further bounds;
Where the wild flock can wander, ye may stray
The long day through, 'mid summer sights and sounds.

The sunshine and the flowers,
And the old trees that cast a solemn shade;
The pleasant evening, the fresh dewy hours,
And the green hills whereon your fathers played; —

The grey and ancient peaks
Round which the silent clouds hang day and night;
And the low voice of water as it makes,
Like a glad creature, murmurings of delight; —

These are your joys! Go forth —
Give your hearts up unto their mighty power;
For in his spirit God has clothed the earth,
And speaketh solemnly from tree and flower.

The voice of hidden rills
Its quiet way into your spirit finds;
And awfully the everlasting hills
Address you in their many tonëd winds.

Ye sit upon the earth
Twining its flowers, and shouting full of glee;
And a pure mighty influence, 'mid your mirth,
Moulds your unconscious spirits silently.

Hence is it that the lands
Of storm and mountain have the noblest sons;
Whom the world reverences. The patriot bands
Were of the hills like you, ye little ones!

Children of pleasant song
Are taught within the mountain solitudes;
For hoary legends to your wilds belong,
And yours are haunts where inspiration broods.

Then go forth — earth and sky
To you are tributary; joys are spread,
Profusely, like the summer flowers that lie
In the green path, beneath your gamesome tread!

Beautifully in the foregoing verses does the poet sympathize with Freedom and its joys: — but she has

a heart that feels for the Captive, too. "Look on *that* picture, and on *this!*"

PAUPER ORPHANS.

They never knew what 'twas to play,
Without control, the long long day,
  In wood and field at will;
They knew no tree, no bird, no bud,
They got no strawberries from the wood,
  No wild thyme from the hill.

They play'd not on a mother's floor;
They toil'd amidst the hum and roar
  Of bobbins and of wheels;—
The air they drew was not the mild
Bounty of Nature, but defiled,—
  And scanty were their meals.

Their lives can know no passing joy,
Dwindled and dwarfed are girl and boy,
  And even in childhood old;
With hollow eye and anxious air,
As if a heavy grasping care
  Their spirits did infold.

Their limbs are swollen, their bodies bent,
And worse, no noble sentiment
  Their darken'd minds pervade;
Feeble and blemish'd by disease,
Nothing their marble hearts can please,
  But doings that degrade.

Oh, hapless heirs of want and woe!
What hope of comfort can they know?
Them man and law condemn;
They have no guide to lead them right,
Darkness they have not known from light,—
HEAVEN be a friend to them!

This seems to me a noble instance of the strength of Mrs. Howitt's moral sympathies. Very few writers equal this "finely touched" spirit. As a further illustration I quote her poem of

A CITY STREET.

I love the fields, the woods, the streams,
The wild flowers fresh and sweet,
And yet I love, no less than these,
The crowded city street:
For haunts of men, where'er they be,
Awake my deepest sympathy.

I see within the city street
Life's most extreme estates,
The gorgeous domes of palaces;
The prison's doleful gates;
The hearths by household virtues blest,
The dens that are the serpent's nest!

I see the rich man, proudly fed,
And richly clothed, pass by;
I see the shivering homeless wretch,
With hunger in his eye:

For life's severest contrasts meet
For ever in the city street.

Infinitely varied as are the styles in which Mrs. Howitt has written, it is not saying too much to affirm that she is successful in all. Perhaps, however, her "BALLADS" are her master-pieces. Nothing can exceed the simple, plaintive tenderness, the unaffected, overpowering pathos of these beautiful compositions. Adopting the manner, she has caught the spirit, of our old Balladists: adding, moreover, a refinement of sentiment which few of our ancient writers display. As a very interesting specimen of Mrs. Howitt's Ballad style, I present her poem called

THE SALE OF THE PET LAMB.

Oh! poverty is a weary thing, 't is full of grief and pain,
It boweth down the heart of man, and dulls his cunning brain:
It maketh even the little child with heavy sighs complain!

The children of the rich man have not their bread to win;
They hardly know how labour is the penalty of sin;
Even as the lilies of the field, they neither toil nor spin.

And year by year, as life wears on, no wants have they to bear;
In all the luxury of the earth they have abundant share:
They walk among life's pleasant ways, where all is rich and fair.

The children of the poor man,—though they be young each one,
Must rise betime each morning, before the setting sun :
And scarcely when the sun is set their daily task is done.

Few things have they to call their own, to fill their hearts with pride,
The sunshine and the summer flowers upon the highway side,
And their own free companionship on heathy commons wide.

Hunger, and cold, and weariness, these are a frightful three,
But another curse there is beside, that darkens poverty ;
It may not have one thing *to love*, how small soe'er it be !

A thousand flocks were on the hills, a thousand flocks and more,
Feeding in sunshine pleasantly ; they were the rich man's store :
— There was the while one little lamb beside the cottage door :

A little lamb that rested with the children 'neath the tree,
That ate, meek creature, from their hands, and nestled to their knee ;
That had a place within their hearts, as one of the family.

But want, even as an armëd man, came down upon their shed,
The father laboured all day long, that his children might be fed,
And, one by one, their household things were sold to buy them bread.

That father, with a downcast eye, upon his threshold stood;
Gaunt poverty each pleasant thought had in his heart subdued:
"What is the creature's life to us?" said he — "'twill buy us food!

"Ay, though the children weep all day, and with down-drooping head
Each does his small task mournfully, the hungry must be fed:
And that which has a price to bring must go to buy us bread."

It went. Oh! parting has a pang the hardest heart to wring:
But the tender soul of a little child with fervent love doth cling,
With love that hath no feignings false, unto each gentle thing!

Therefore most sorrowful it was those children small to see,
Most sorrowful to hear them plead for the lamb so piteously;
"Oh! mother dear! it loveth us; and what beside have we?"

"Let's take him off to the broad green hill!" in his impotent
despair
Said one strong boy: "let's take him off; — the hills are
wide and fair,
I know a little hiding place, and we will keep him there!"

Oh vain! They took the little lamb, and straightway
tied him down,
With a strong cord they tied him fast; and o'er the common
brown
And o'er the hot and flinty roads, they took him to the town.

The little children through that day and throughout all the
morrow,
From everything about the house a mournful thought did
borrow;
The very bread they had to eat was food unto their sorrow.

O poverty is a weary thing, 'tis full of grief and pain,
It keepeth down the soul of man as with an iron chain;
It maketh even the little child with heavy sighs complain.

Like the great majority of her Sister-Poets, Mrs. Howitt is truly devotional. A fine spirit of piety breathes through all her works. As a specimen I take her well-known lines called

THOUGHTS OF HEAVEN.

Thoughts of heaven! they come when low
The summer even breeze doth faintly blow;

When the mighty sea shines clear, unstirr'd
By the wavering tide, or the dipping bird:
They come in the rush of the surging storm,
When the blackening waves rear their giant form,—
When o'er the dark rocks curl the breakers white,
And the terrible lightnings rend the night,—
When the noble ship hath vainly striven
With the tempest's might, come thoughts of heaven.

They come where man doth not intrude,
In the untrack'd forest's solitude;
In the stillness of the gray rock's height,
Where the lonely eagle takes his flight;
On peaks where lie the eternal snows;
In the sunbright isle, 'mid its rich repose.
In the healthy glen, by the dark clear lake,
When the fair swan sails from her silent brake;
When Nature reigns in her deepest rest,
Pure thoughts of heaven come unrepress'd.

They come as we gaze on the midnight sky
When the star-gemm'd vault looks dark and high,
And the soul, on the wings of thought sublime,
Soars from the dim world, and the bounds of time.
Till the mental eye becomes unseal'd,
And the mystery of being in light revealed.
They rise in the Gothic chapel dim,
When slowly comes forth the holy hymn,
And the organ's rich tones swell full and high,
Till the roof peals back the melody.

Thoughts of heaven! from his joy beguiled,
They come to the bright-eyed, sinless child;
To the man of age in his dim decay,
Bringing hope that his youth had borne away;
To the woe-smit soul in its dark distress,
As flowers spring up in the wilderness:
And in silent chambers of the dead,
When the mourner goes with soundless tread;
For, as the day-beams freely fall,
Pure thoughts of heaven are sent to all.

Highly religious, however, as Mrs. Howitt is, she is not in the slightest degree bigoted. She can appreciate piety in any of its shapes.

Creeds matter not to her. She asks no more
Than that the one Great Father, men adore:
For loving Him, with better right we call
On God as Father, who hath loved us all.

Her *Faith* is the earnest trust of a true and childlike soul, unfettered by wordy dogmas: her *Hope* is the cheerful expectation of a spirit confident of a coming immortality, to be shared with people of every clime and kindred and nation and tongue: her *Charity* is of the kind that "envieth not, and thinketh no evil,"—that can extend the hand of fellowship to all who bear the human form, and find in the poorest of the species a brother and a friend.

In the subjoined lines the spirit of true religion is very sweetly apparent; and combined with it there is a

touch of sound philosophy such as we should do well to take closely to our hearts. The Mammonism of the age is powerfully described; and the purifying influences of religion become all the more evident from the contrast. The passage is quite a characteristic one.

ENGLISH CHURCHES.

How beautiful they stand,
Those ancient altars of our native land!
Amid the pasture fields and dark green woods,
Amid the mountain's cloudy solitudes;
By rivers broad that rush into the sea;
By little brooks that with a lapsing sound,
Like playful children, run by copse and lea:
Each in its little plot of holy ground,
How beautiful they stand,
Those old grey churches of our native land!

Our lives are all turmoil;
Our souls are in a weary strife and toil,
Grasping and straining — tasking nerve and brain,
— Both day and night for gain!
We have grown worldly: have made gold our god:
Have turned our hearts away from lowly things:
We seek not now the wild flower on the sod;
We see not snowy-folded angels' wings
Amid the summer skies;
For visions come not to polluted eyes!

Yet, blessed quiet fanes!
Still piety, still poetry remains,

And shall remain, whilst ever on the air
One chapel-bell calls high and low to prayer,—
Whilst ever green and sunny churchyards keep
The dust of one beloved, and tears are shed,
From founts which in the human heart lie deep!
Something in these aspiring days we need
To keep our spirits lowly,
To set within our hearts sweet thoughts and holy!

And 't is for this they stand,
The old grey churches of our native land!
And even in the gold-corrupted mart,
In the great City's heart,
They stand; and chanting dim and organ sound,
And stated services of prayer and praise,
Like to the righteous ten who were not found
For the polluted city, shall upraise,
Meek faith and love sincere,—
Better in time of need than shield and spear!

Occasionally we find in Mrs. Howitt's writings a more lofty and ambitious aim than that simple one which generally characterises them: or perhaps I should rather say that she seeks to effect the same object which she has commonly in view, by loftier means. In her poem called *The Seven Temptations*, one of the finest works ever written by a woman, with touches, now like Byron's, now like Goethe's, now almost Miltonic, we find her analysing the nature and tracing the operations of the principle of Evil: and although it is not to be expected that she should make this awful matter plain, still

she often discourses most eloquently and instructively upon it. The following lines are, I think, very nobly conceived: they mount, indeed, into true sublimity.

THOU, that createdst with a word each star;
Who out of nothingness brought systems forth;
Yet didst exalt beyond creation, far,
The human soul, immortal at its birth; —
Thou gavest light and darkness; life and death;
Thou gavest good and ill,
Twin powers, to be
Companions of its mortal devious path;
Yet left the human will
Unlimited and free!
We know how pain and woe,
Sorrow and sin make up the sum of life!
How good and evil are at ceaseless strife,
And how the soul doth err in choice we know!
Yet not for this droop we, nor are afraid;
We know thy goodness, we behold thy might;
We know thy truth can never be gainsaid,
And what thou dost is right!
We glorify thy name that thus it is;
We glorify thy name for more than this!
We know that out of darkness shines thy light;
That out of evil cometh forth thy good;
That none shall circumvent the Infinite,
Nor can Omnipotence be e'er subdued!
We know that doubt shall cease, and feeble terror;
That thou wilt wipe all tears from every eye;
That Thine Almighty Truth shall vanquish Error,
And Death shall die!

We know that this shall be,
Therefore we trust in Thee,
And pour in balm to human hearts that bleed;
And bind the broken and the bruisëd reed;
And say, Rejoice, Rejoice!
For Truth is strong:
Exalt ye every voice
In one triumphant song —
For Truth is God, and He shall make you free!
Evil is but of Time; — Good, of Eternity!

To give a just and complete idea of Mrs. Howitt's varied and voluminous writings requires far more space than the limits of this work will afford: the reader, therefore, who desires — and who will not? — to make a more familiar acquaintance with this gifted lady's muse, must turn to her works for himself. He must go to her book of *Birds and Flowers*, and follow her through wood and copse, by lake and stream,

"And think of angels' voices
When the birds' songs he hears:" —

and he must turn to her volume of *Fireside Verses*, and read of little Marien —

"The angel of the poor," —

and of Mabel on Midsummer-day: and of The Boy of the Southern Isle, in whom he will find a spirit akin to that of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. And above all he must acquaint himself with her *Book of Ballads*; mourn with the desolate Magdalene; hie

with Mary to the top of the Caldon Low; search the woods for little Lilien May; and listen to the angel-words of The Boy of Heaven. He will find before long that he is in company with one of the most richly freighted spirits that ever sailed down the stream of Time.

In summing up my imperfect estimate of Mary Howitt, I would say that no Female Poet in our literature surpasses her, and that but few equal her. As a versifier, as a moralist, and as a philosopher, she may safely challenge comparison with any writer of her own sex, and with most of the writers of the other sex: whilst as regards grace, pathos, womanly sentiment, and Christian sympathy, she has scarcely "a rival near her throne." I believe that her writings have done more to elevate our idea of woman's intellectual character, than all the treatises on that subject in our language: I believe further, that her works tend most powerfully to ameliorate, exalt, and purify the heart of the world; and I believe, finally, that she is the truest representative we have among our Poets of that fervent, practical, beautiful Christianity which was prophesied in the song of the angels at Bethlehem,—PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL AMONG MEN. Mrs. Howitt is indeed a writer of whom England may be, and will be, eternally proud.

MRS. SOUTHEY,

FORMERLY Miss Caroline Bowles, is the daughter of the late Reverend William Lisle Bowles, and the widow of the late Robert Southey, the poet. She has written several poetical works, all of which have been received with the favour due to the author's genius.

It would be difficult, I think, to find among our Female Poets one who in vigour of mind, intensity of feeling, and gracefulness of expression, excels Mrs. Southey. Her poems have a simplicity, a naturalness, which is as pleasing as it is rare. Her verses are the very perfection of direct and inartificial thought. In terse force of style I do not know her superior: whilst at the same time she has the quickness of vision and the sensitiveness of sympathy which characterise her sex. It is impossible not to notice the fewness of the touches which compose the following fine picture of

THE PAUPER'S DEATHBED.

Tread softly! — bow the head —
In reverent silence bow! —
No passing bell doth toll,
Yet an immortal soul
Is passing now.

Stranger! however great,
With lowly reverence bow:
There's one in that poor shed —
One by that paltry bed,
Greater than thou.

Beneath that beggar's roof,
Lo! Death doth keep his state;
Enter! — no crowds attend —
Enter! — no guards defend
This palace-gate!

That pavement damp and cold,
No smiling courtiers tread;
One silent woman stands
Lifting with meagre hands
A dying head.

No mingling voices sound —
An infant wail alone;
A sob suppress'd — again
That short deep gasp, and then
The parting groan.

Oh, change! oh, wondrous change —
Burst are the prison bars —
This moment there, so low,
So agonized, and now
Beyond the stars!

Oh, change — stupendous change!
There lies the soulless clod:
The sun eternal breaks —
The new immortal wakes —
Wakes with his God.

For depth and irresistible force of natural pathos I think I may challenge our literature to produce a more perfect specimen than Mrs. Southey's poem called

THE DYING MOTHER TO HER INFANT.

My baby! my poor little one! thou 'rt come a winter flower,
A pale and tender blossom, in a cold unkindly hour;
Thou comest like the Snow-drop, and like that pretty thing,
The power that calls my bud to life will shield its blossoming.

The snow-drop hath no guardian leaves, to fold her safe and warm,
Yet well she bides the bitter blast, and weathers out the storm;
I shall not long enfold thee thus — not long, but well I know
The everlasting arms, my Babe! will never let thee go.

The snow-drop—how it haunts me still! hangs down her fair young head;
So thine may droop in days to come, when I have long been dead.
And yet the little snow-drop 's safe—from her instruction seek;
For who would crush the motherless, the lowly, and the meek?

Yet motherless thou 'lt not be long — not long *in name*, my life!
Thy father soon will bring him home another, fairer, wife:
Be loving, dutiful to her — find favour in her sight —
—But never, O my child, forget thine own poor mother quite.

But who will speak to thee of her? — The gravestone at her head
Will only tell the name and age and lineage of the dead:
But not a word of all the love — the mighty love for thee
That crowded years into an hour of brief maternity.

They 'll put my picture from its place to fix another's there,
That picture that was thought so like, and then so passing fair!
Some chamber in thy father's house they 'll let thee call thine own;
Oh! take it there to look upon, when thou art all alone —

To breathe thine early griefs unto, if such assail my child;
To turn to from less loving looks, from faces not so mild.
Alas! unconscious little one, thou 'lt never know that best,
That holiest home of all the earth, a living mother's breast.

I do repent me now too late of each impatient thought,
That would not let me tarry out God's leisure as I ought:
I 've been too hasty, peevish, proud: I long'd to go away;
And now I 'd fain live on for thee, God will not let me stay.

Oh! when I think of what I was, and what I *might have been*,
A bride last year—and now to die!—and I am scarce nineteen;
And just, just opening in my heart a fount of love so new!
So deep! Could *that* have run to waste? Could that have fail'd me, too?

The bliss it would have been to see my daughter at my side!
My prime of life scarce overblown, and hers in all its pride:
To deck her with my finest things, with all I've rich and rare:
To hear it said, "How beautiful!' and good as she is fair!"

And then to place the marriage-wreath upon that bright young brow,—
Oh! no—not *that*—'t is full of thorns.—Alas! I 'm wandering now.
This weak, weak head! this foolish heart! they 'll cheat me to the last:
I've been a dreamer all my life, and now that life is past!

Thou 'lt have thy father's eyes, my child! Oh! once how kind they were!
His long black lashes, his own smile, and just such raven hair.
But here 's a mark—Poor innocent! he 'll love thee for 't the less—
Like that upon thy mother's cheek, his lips were wont to press.

And yet perhaps I do him wrong:—perhaps, when all 's forgot
But our young loves, in memory's mood he 'll kiss this very spot.
Oh! then, my dearest! clasp thine arms about his neck full fast;
And whisper that I bless'd him now, and loved him to the last.

I 've heard that little infants converse by smiles and signs
With the guardian band of angels that round about them shines,
Unseen by grosser senses; beloved one! dost thou
Smile so upon thy heavenly friends, and commune with them now?

And hast thou not one look for me? Those little restless eyes
Are wand'ring, wand'ring everywhere, the while thy mother dies;
And yet, perhaps thou 'rt seeking me, expecting me, mine own!
Come, Death! and make me to my child at least in spirit known.

The beauty of the following, as of the foregoing extracts, will be manifest without comment: indeed, Mrs. Southey is one of those particularly natural and lucid writers, whose genius is apparent without the aid of critic or eulogist.

THE RIVER.

River! river! little river!
Bright you sparkle on your way;
O'er the yellow pebbles dancing,
Through the flowers and foliage glancing,
Like a child at play.

River! river! swelling river!
On you rush o'er rough and smooth;
Louder, faster, brawling, leaping
Over rocks, by rose-banks sweeping,
Like impetuous youth.

River! river! brimming river!
Broad, and deep, and *still* as Time;
Seeming *still*, yet still in motion,
Tending onward to the ocean,
Just like mortal prime.

River! river! rapid river!
Swifter now you slip away;
Swift and silent as an arrow,
Through a channel dark and narrow,
Like life's closing day.

River! river! headlong river!
Down you dash into the sea;
Sea, that line hath never sounded,
Sea, that voyage hath never rounded,
Like Eternity.

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS.

How happily, how happily, the flowers die away!
Oh, could we but return to earth as easily as they!
Just live a life of sunshine, of innocence, and bloom;
Then drop without decrepitude or pain into the tomb.

The gay and glorious creatures! "They neither toil nor spin,"
Yet lo! what goodly raiment they are all apparell'd in;
No tears are on their beauty, but dewy gems more bright
Than ever brow of Eastern queen endiadem'd with light.

The young rejoicing creatures! their pleasures never pall,
Nor lose in sweet contentment, because so free to all;
The dew, the shower, the sunshine, the balmy blessed air
Spend nothing of their freshness, though all may freely share.

The happy careless creatures! of time they take no heed;
Nor weary of his creeping, nor tremble at his speed;
Nor sigh with sick impatience, and wish the light away;
Nor when 't is gone cry dolefully, "Would God that it were day!"

And when their lives are over, they drop away to rest,
Unconscious of the penal doom, on holy Nature's breast.
No pain have they in dying — no shrinking from decay;
Oh, could we but return to earth as easily as they!

MARINER'S HYMN.

Launch thy bark, mariner!
Christian, God speed thee!
Let loose the rudder-bands —
Good angels lead thee!
Set thy sails warily,
Tempests will come;
Steer thy course steadily;
Christian, steer home!

Look to the weather-bow,
Breakers are round thee;
Let fall the plummet now,
Shallows may ground thee.
Reef in the foresail, there!
Hold the helm fast!
So — let the vessel wear —
There swept the blast.

"What of the night, watchman?
What of the night?"
"Cloudy, all quiet,
No land yet — all's right."
Be wakeful, be vigilant;
Danger may be
At an hour when all seemeth
Securest to thee.

How! gains the leak so fast?
Clean out the hold;
Hoist up thy merchandise,
Heave out thy gold;
There — let the ingots go —
Now the ship rights;
Hurrah! the harbour 's near,
Lo! the red lights!

Slacken not sail yet
At inlet or island;
Straight for the beacon steer,
Straight for the high land;
Crowd all thy canvas on,
Cut through the foam:
Christian! cast anchor now,
Heaven is thy home!

Mrs. Southey's Poetical Works are comprised in the following Volumes: — *Ellen Fitzarthur*, *The Widow's Tale and other Poems*, *The Birthday and other Poems*, and *Solitary Hours*.

FELICIA HEMANS.

It would be as much out of good taste as it is unnecessary, to prefix a memoir of Mrs. Hemans to this brief estimate of her writings. The melancholy circumstances connected with her history are too generally known already, and should be screened rather than unveiled.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that Mrs. Hemans was born in 1793, of a highly respectable family; that she was married early in life to Captain Hemans, from whom she subsequently separated; and that, after a life of singular purity and goodness, she died in 1835.

I think there can be no doubt that Mrs. Hemans takes decidedly one of the most prominent places among our Female Poets. She seems to me to represent and unite as purely and completely as any other writer in our literature the peculiar and specific qualities of the female mind. Her works are to my mind a perfect embodiment of woman's soul:—I would say that they are *intensely* feminine. The delicacy, the softness, the pureness, the quick observant vision, the ready sensibility, the devotedness, the faith of woman's nature find in Mrs. Hemans their ultra representative. The very diffuseness of her style is feminine, and one would not wish it altered. Diction, manner, sentiment, passion, and belief are in her as

delicately *rounded off* as are the bones and muscles of the Medicean Venus. There is not a harsh or angular line in her whole mental contour. I do not know a violent, spasmodic, or contorted idea in all her writings; but every page is full of grace, harmony, and expressive glowing beauty.

In nothing can one trace her feminine spirit more strikingly than in her domestic *home*-loving ideas. Her first volume, written before she was fifteen, is chiefly about home: it is entitled *The Domestic Affections;* and is full of calm sweet pictures of most gentle and refining tendency.

I would particularly refer the reader to that exquisite passage in the poem where Domestic Bliss is compared to the Violet, smiling in the vale. The image is very purely conceived, and the spirit and treatment of it are most spiritual and elevating.

No where, indeed, can we find a more pure and refined idea of home than that which pervades Mrs. Hemans's writings on the subject. She reproduces the conception in very many instances, and always with the same chasteness. The beautiful lines entitled *The Homes of England,* in which every class is made to participate in domestic pleasures; those called *A Domestic Scene,* where the father is represented as reading the evening Psalms in the soft sunset, while on his face shines —

> "A radiance all the spirit's own,
> Caught not from sun or star;"

and many more passages of similar character, might be cited in illustration.

And not only of the homes of *earth* has Mrs. Hemans a fervent and beautiful conception; but of a —

. . "home more pure than this,
Set in the deathless azure of the sky," —

she fails not to speak also. The Temporal home suggests the Spiritual. The Mortal's resting-place on Earth prefigures the *Im*mortal's resting-place in Heaven. The idea of heaven as a *home* is beautifully wrought out in her lines called *The Two Homes*, wherein a desolate stranger has a glowing picture of a happy home placed before him, and then is asked to describe his own. How touching is the sadness of the reply! —

. . . "In solemn peace 'tis lying
Far o'er the deserts and the tombs away;
'Tis where I, too, am loved with love undying,
And fond hearts wait my step: — But where are they?

"Ask where the earth's departed have their dwelling,
Ask of the clouds, the stars, the trackless air;
I know it not, yet trust the whisper, telling
My lonely heart that love unchanged is there."

In another very important respect Mrs. Hemans finely represents the pure sentiment of her sex: I mean in her sensitive, deep, and clinging sense of affection. Her lovingness of feeling is exquisite. To *passion* she is well nigh a stranger; but it may be questioned

whether passion ever proceeds from so great or so true a love as that more pervading and more sympathetic feeling which expresses itself less wildly. Passion may be said to be a sort of madness, resulting from an overpowering sense of beauty or desire; and seems to have in it but little of the true nature of love at all. Real affection is ever mild, ever gracious and benign. It never *raves* till it becomes selfish; and then it ceases to be love, and grows into a kind of guilt.

Byron is a poet of passion — indeed, of all others *the* poet of passion. Love is with him a selfish and unrestrainable idolatry — wild and mighty, but fickle and forgetful. It is, while it lasts, a tempest, a hurricane, and it scathes where it alights; but its force is soon spent, and then there is no trace of it, but in the ruin it has wrought.

Far different is Mrs. Hemans. Affection is with her a serene, radiating principle, mild and ethereal in its nature, gentle in its attributes, pervading and lasting in its effects. Her soul is full of sympathies; and the refusal of sympathy seems to her almost the height of crime. This is pathetically shown in her poem entitled *The Burial of the Forest*, founded on the following incident: —

An Indian who had established himself in a township of Maine, feeling indignantly the want of sympathy evinced towards him by the white inhabitants, particularly on the death of his only child, gave up his farm soon afterwards, dug up the body of his child, and

carried it with him two hundred miles through the forest, to join his tribe of the Canadian Indians.

Mrs. Hemans's Poem is a truly poetical version of this touching fact. Very nobly speaks the high-souled father as—

> "With spirit high and fearless,
> As by mighty wings upborne,"—

he pursues his solitary way.

> I have rais'd thee from the grave-sod,
> By the white man's path defiled;
> On to the ancestral wilderness
> I bear thy dust, my child.
>
> I have ask'd the ancient desert
> To give my dead a place,
> Where the stately footsteps of the free
> Alone should leave a trace.
>
> And the tossing pines made answer—
> "Go, bring us back thine own;"
> And the streams from all the hunter's hills
> Rush'd with an echoing tone.
>
> Thou shalt rest by sounding waters
> That yet untamed may roll;
> The voices of that chainless host
> With joy shall fill thy soul.

To the forests, to the cedars,
To the warrior and his bow,
Back, back! — I bore thee laughing thence,
I bear thee slumbering, now!

I bear thee unto burial
With the mighty hunters gone;
I shall hear thee in the forest-breeze,
Thou wilt speak of joy, my son!

In the silence of the midnight
I journey with the dead;
But my heart is strong, my step is fleet,
My father's path I tread!

Mrs. Hemans has all the harmony of expression, all the subtle perception and refined love of beauty, which distinguish her sex. Her verses are at once pictures and music. What versification can be more beautiful and harmonious than this, from the *Voice of Spring?* —

I come, I come! ye have call'd me long;
I come o'er the mountains with light and song!
Ye may trace my steps o'er the wakening earth,
By the winds which tell of the violet's birth;
By the primrose stars in the shadowy grass,
By the green leaves opening as I pass.

The sensibility of Mrs. Hemans to the influences of beauty is strikingly seen in her passion for flowers. Nothing can be more refined. Some poets write of

flowers in the spirit of botanists. Not so our author. Her worship is paid to the *spirit* of beauty indwelling in them — and no logic can explain her devotion to her. She asks in one place —

> . . . By what strange spell
> Is it, that ever when I gaze on flowers
> I dream of *music?* Something in their hues
> All melting into colour'd harmonies,
> Wafts a swift thought of interwoven chords,
> Of blended singing-tones, that swell and die
> In tenderest falls away.

I see in that simple inquiry a plummet sounding the lowest deep of Truth. I see in it a recognition of the infinite fact, that, as the heart of Nature is everywhere beauty, so it is everywhere music.

But, after all, it is chiefly in the strength of her religious sentiment that Mrs. Hemans most completely typifies and represents her sex. It has not now to be proved, I imagine, that in simple steadfastness of faith, in gentle calmness of hope, and in sweet enthusiasm of piety, woman far surpasses man. She has more awe, more reverence, more reliance, more implicitness, than he; and hence her greater fervour of religion. The mild, forgiving, loving doctrines of the Man of Sorrows, too, find a readier home in her heart than in man's: and hence her prominence in all works of charity and goodness. But for this, man, with his wars, strifes, and passions, would long since have turned this earth into a hell.

Mrs. Hemans, I repeat, embodies woman's religious excellence most completely. Religion is with her both an intellectual conviction and a moral persuasion. We may see here how she argues on the subject.

EXTRACT FROM THE SCEPTIC.

But hop'st thou, in thy panoply of pride,
Heaven's messenger, Affliction, to deride?
In thine own strength unaided to defy,
With Stoic smile, the arrows of the sky?
Torn by the Vulture, fetter'd to the rock,
Still, demigod! the tempest wilt thou mock?
Alas! the tower that crests the mountain's brow
A thousand years may awe the vale below,
Yet not the less be shatter'd on its height,
By one dread moment of the earthquake's might!
A thousand pangs thy bosom may have borne,
In silent fortitude, or haughty scorn,
Till comes the one, the master-anguish, sent
To break the mighty heart that ne'er was bent.

Oh! what is Nature's strength? — the vacant eye,
By mind deserted, hath a dread reply!
The wild delirious laughter of despair,
The mirth of frenzy — seek an answer there!
Turn not away, though Pity's cheek grow pale,
Close not thine ear against their awful tale.
They tell thee, Reason, wandering from the ray
Of Faith, the blazing pillar of her way,
In the mid-darkness of the stormy wave,
Forsook the struggling soul she could not save!

Weep not, sad moralist! o'er desert plains,
Strew'd with the wrecks of grandeur, mouldering fanes,
Arches of triumph, long with weeds o'ergrown,
And regal cities now the serpent's own:
Earth has more awful ruins — one lost mind,
Whose star is quench'd, hath lessons for mankind
Of deeper import than each prostrate dome,
Mingling its marble with the dust of Rome.

Note. — It is a source of deep regret to the Compiler, that he has not been at liberty to extract a single entire poem from the works of Mrs. Hemans. The genius of this gifted lady undoubtedly demands the most ample and copious illustration from any one who pretends to criticise it; and the Author originally selected a sufficient, yet a comparatively small, number of passages to support the title of Mrs. Hemans to the high place which he meant to claim for her amongst our Poetesses. The Proprietor of the Copyright, however, declined to permit the republication of even the few selections which were made; and hence the Compiler has been compelled to offer his opinions, without presenting any illustrations in support of them. He feels bound to mention this, lest it should be said, as it might very justly, that the writings of Mrs. Hemans have not been considered so fully as they ought to have been.

THE HONOURABLE MRS. NORTON.

AMONGST the Poetesses of our land Mrs. Norton certainly claims a most distinguished place. Not a few critics, indeed, assign her the very first. And I think it would be difficult to disprove her right to a position with the loftiest. It is most assuredly not my intention to attempt such a demonstration; for if I do not agree unreservedly with the assertion of her superiority over all, I at all events am prepared to maintain her equality with any of her sister poets. I will go further, and avow my belief that, under other and more favourable circumstances, Mrs. Norton might have gained even greater fame than she has yet achieved. Just as some paintings give one the idea that the artist has power to produce works of higher merit, so do Mrs. Norton's poems suggest the possession of latent genius far transcending that which is displayed in them.

But we must speak of her as she is.

The Quarterly Review, in a criticism of Mrs. Norton's writings, says of her—that "she is *the Byron* of our modern poetesses. She has very much of that intense personal passion by which Byron's poetry is distinguished from the larger grasp and deeper communion with man and nature of Wordsworth. She has also Byron's beautiful intervals of tenderness, his strong practical thought, and his forceful expression. It is

not an artificial imitation, but a natural parallel." I think we cannot safely adopt this opinion without some little qualification. That Mrs. Norton has a fervour, a tenderness, and a force of expression which greatly resemble Byron's, there cannot be a doubt: but there all similarity ceases. Byron is the personification of passionate selfishness: his range of sympathy is extremely small: Mrs. Norton, on the other hand, has a large and generous heart, essentially unselfish in its feelings, and universal in its sympathies. Byron has a sneering, mocking, disbelieving spirit: Mrs. Norton a simple, beautiful, childlike implicitness of soul. Byron's strains resemble the vast, roaring, wilful Waterfall, rushing headlong over desolate rocks, with a sound like the wail of a lost spirit: Mrs. Norton's, the soft full-flowing River, margined with flowers, and uttering sweet music. What is there in Byron that resembles this: —

THE MOTHER'S HEART.

When first thou camest, gentle, shy, and fond,
My eldest born, first hope, and dearest treasure,
My heart received thee with a joy beyond
All that it yet had felt of earthly pleasure;
Nor thought that any love again might be
So deep and strong as that I felt for thee.

Faithful and true, with sense beyond thy years,
And natural piety that lean'd to heaven;
Wrung by a harsh word suddenly to tears,
Yet patient of rebuke when justly given —

Obedient, easy to be reconciled,
And meekly cheerful — such wert thou, my child!

Not willing to be left: still by my side
Haunting my walks, while summer-day was dying;
Nor leaving in thy turn; but pleas'd to glide
Through the dark room, where I was sadly lying;
Or by the couch of pain, a sitter meek,
Watch the dim eye, and kiss the feverish cheek.

O boy! of such as thou are oftenest made
Earth's fragile idols; like a tender flower,
No strength in all thy freshness — prone to fade —
And bending weakly to the thunder-shower —
Still round the loved, thy heart found force to bind,
And clung like woodbine shaken in the wind.

Her passionate poems display a radical difference from those of Byron. Byron is, even in his purest moments, sensual and earthly; Mrs. Norton is invariably serene and spiritual. Byron's passion is like a lightning flash. Mrs. Norton's like a sunbeam. I would refer the reader to her exquisite poem of "Sappho," in illustration. I deeply regret that I am not permitted to present the lines themselves.

Mrs. Norton has a truer moral vision than Byron had: no where in Byron can be found a philosophical truth so calmly and justly asserted as in the following beautiful comparison of *woman's* endurance with man's: —

Warriors and statesmen have their meed of praise,
And what they do, or suffer, men record;
But the long sacrifice of *woman's* days
Passes without a thought, without a word;
And many a lofty struggle for the sake
Of duties sternly, faithfully fulfill'd —
For which the anxious mind must watch and wake,
And the strong feelings of the heart be still'd —
Goes by unheeded as the summer wind,
And leaves no memory and no trace behind!
Yet it may be, more lofty courage dwells
In one meek heart which braves an adverse fate,
Than his whose ardent soul indignant swells
Warm'd by the fight, or cheer'd through high debate:
The soldier dies surrounded: could he *live*
Alone to suffer, and *alone* to strive?

A fine proof of Mrs. Norton's wide range of sympathy is to be found in the poem descriptive of an Arab's farewell to his Horse. The enthusiastic regard which it is well known the Arab always entertains for his steed finds a most eloquent expositor in our author. The feeling is a beautiful one, and it is beautifully rendered.

THE ARAB'S FAREWELL TO HIS STEED.

My beautiful! my beautiful! that standest meekly by,
With thy proudly arch'd and glossy neck, thy dark and fiery eye —

Fret not to roam the desert now with all thy winged speed,
I may not mount on thee again, thou 'rt sold, my Arab steed!
Fret not with that impatient hoof, snuff not the breezy wind,
The farther that thou fliest now, so far am I behind.
The stranger hath thy bridle-rein, thy master hath his gold,
Fleet limbed and beautiful, farewell! thou 'rt sold, my steed, thou 'rt sold!

Farewell! those free untired limbs full many a mile must roam,
To reach the chill and wintry sky which clouds the stranger's home;
Some other hand, less fond, must now thy corn and bread prepare,
Thy silky mane, I braided once, must be another's care.
The morning sun shall dawn again, but never more with thee
Shall I gallop through the desert paths where we were wont to be.
Evening shall darken on the earth, and o'er the sandy plain
Some other steed, with slower step, shall bear me home again.

Yes! thou must go! the wild free breeze, the brilliant sun and sky,
Thy master's house, from all of these my exil'd one must fly.
Thy proud dark eye will grow less proud, thy step become less fleet,
And vainly shalt thou arch thy neck thy master's hand to meet.
Only in sleep shall I behold that dark eye glancing bright;
Only in sleep shall hear again that step so firm and light;

And when I raise my dreaming arm to check or cheer thy speed,
Then must I, starting, wake to feel thou 'rt sold, my Arab steed!

Ah, rudely then, unseen by me, some cruel hand may chide,
Till foam-wreaths lie, like crested waves, along thy panting side;
And the rich blood that 's in thee swells in thy indignant pain,
Till careless eyes which rest on thee, may count each starting vein.
Will they ill-use thee? If I thought—but no, it cannot be—
Thou art so swift, yet easy curb'd, so gentle yet so free.
And yet if haply when thou 'rt gone, my lonely heart should yearn,
Can the same hand which casts thee off command thee to return?

Return? Alas, my Arab steed, what shall thy master do,
When thou, who wert his all of joy, hast vanish'd from his view?
When the dim distance cheats mine eye, and through the gathering tears,
Thy bright form for a moment like the false mirage appears.
Slow and unmounted will I roam with weary foot alone,
Where with fleet step and joyous bound thou oft hast borne me on:
And sitting down by that green well, will pause and sadly think,
'T was here he bow'd his glossy neck, when last I saw him drink.

When last I saw him drink! Away! the fever'd dream is o'er;
I could not live a day, and know that we should meet no more;
They tempted me, my beautiful! for hunger's power is strong,
They tempted me, my beautiful! but I have lov'd too long:
Who said that I had given thee up? Who said that thou wert sold?
'T is false, 't is false! my Arab steed! I fling them back their gold.
Thus, thus, I leap upon thy back, and scour the distant plains,—
Away!—Who overtakes us now shall claim thee for his pains!

Of Mrs. Norton's impassioned verses none perhaps excel the lines addressed by her *To the Duchess of Sutherland*, when that noble lady remained stedfastly her friend under the most discouraging circumstances. Noble was the friendship, and noble is the monument erected to it.

Once more, my harp! once more, although I thought
Never to wake thy silent strings again;
A wandering dream thy gentle chords have wrought,
And my sad heart, which long hath dwelt in pain,
Soars like a wild bird from a cypress bough,
Into the poet's heaven, and leaves dull grief below!

And unto thee, the beautiful and pure,
Whose lot is cast amid that busy world
Where only sluggish Dulness dwells secure,
And Fancy's generous wing is faintly furl'd;
To thee—whose friendship kept its equal truth
Through the most dreary hour of my embitter'd youth—

I dedicate the lay. Ah! never bard,
In days when Poverty was twin with Song;
Nor wandering harper, lonely and ill-starr'd,
Cheer'd by some castle's chief, and harbour'd long;
Nor Scott's Last Minstrel, in his trembling lays,
Woke with a warmer heart the earnest need of praise!

For easy are the alms the rich man spares
To sons of Genius, by misfortune bent;
But thou gav'st me, what woman seldom dares,
Belief—in spite of many a cold dissent—
When slander'd and malign'd, I stood apart
From those whose bounded power hath wrung, not crush'd, my heart.

Thou, then, when cowards lied away my name,
And scoff'd to see me feebly stem the tide;
When some were kind on whom I had no claim,
And some forsook on whom my love relied,
And some who might have battled for my sake,
Stood off in doubt to see what turn the world would take—

Thou gav'st me that the poor do give the poor,
Kind words and holy wishes and true tears;
The lov'd, the near of kin could do no more,
Who changed not with the gloom of varying years,
But clung the closer when I stood forlorn,
And blunted Slander's dart with their indignant scorn.

For they who credit crime, are they who feel
Their own hearts weak to unresisted sin;
Memory, not judgment, prompts the thoughts which steal
O'er minds like these, an easy faith to win;
And tales of broken truth are still believed
Most readily by those who have themselves deceived.

But like a white swan down a troubled stream,
Whose ruffling pinion hath the power to fling
Aside the turbid drops which darkly gleam
And mar the freshness of her snowy wing,—
So thou, with queenly grace and gentle pride,
Along the world's dark waves in purity dost glide.

Thy pale and pearly cheek was never made
To crimson with a faint false-hearted shame;
Thou didst not shrink—of bitter tongues afraid,
Who hunt in packs the object of their blame;
To thee the sad denial still held true,
For from thine own good thoughts thy heart its mercy drew.

And though my faint and tributary rhymes
Add nothing to the glory of thy day,
Yet every poet hopes that after-times
Shall set some value on his votive lay;
And I would fain one gentle deed record,
Among the many such with which thy life is stored.

In conclusion I would say of Mrs. Norton that with a considerable similarity to Byron in manner, she is essentially unlike him in spirit: that whereas *his* imagination is daring and vigorous, hers is timid and gentle: that whereas *his* passion is selfish and infatuating, hers is mild and tender and pervading: that whereas *he* scoffs and sneers at the best and happiest ties of life, she does her most to strengthen and extend their influence: and that while *he* with a proud scepticism flings from him the consolations and delights of religion, she clasps them closely to her heart, and finds in them a balm for the bitterest wounds of her spirit.

LÆTITIA ELIZABETH MACLEAN.

This remarkable writer, better known perhaps as Miss Landon, or L. E. L., may, I think, be considered the Byron of our poetesses. In character, history, and genius, there are not a few striking points of similitude between her and the great bard referred to: both acquired a world-wide fame in youth: both were shamefully maligned and misrepresented; both became gloomy and misanthropical under the falsehoods asserted of them; both died young, and abroad.

Mrs. Maclean's history is perhaps the more tragic of the two. Early deprived of parental care and assistance, she had almost from childhood to struggle with the worst difficulties of life; and none but those who have experienced similar endurances can understand how much a young warm heart can be chilled by them, and changed for the worse. When her circumstances became ameliorated by her success in literature, she had to contend against the worse evils of over-praise, unjust censure, and infamous slander. Can we wonder that she acquired unhealthy views of life? Ought we not rather to wonder that her sentiments are on the whole so sound as we find them? Oh, the world is a hard task-master. It first spoils its pupil, and then complains of his deficiences! Finally, in the zenith of her fame, Mrs. Maclean, formed, more than most beings,

for social intercourse, quits her country and her friends, for a solitary home on the coast of Africa: there to pine in loneliness for a month or two, and then to die. Yes! it is a *very* mournful story.

Of Mrs. Maclean's genius there can be but one opinion. It is distinguished by very great intellectual power, a highly sensitive and ardent imagination, an intense fervour of passionate emotion, and almost unequalled eloquence and fluency. Of mere art she displays but little. Her style is irregular and careless, and her painting sketchy and rough: but there is genius in every line she has written.

Mrs. Maclean has herself given us a just portraiture of her peculiar powers. In the concluding lines of her fine poem entitled *The Golden Violet*, she says

> "If that I know myself what keys
> Yield to my hand their sympathies,
> I should say 'tis those whose tone
> Is *Woman's Love* and *Sorrow's own.*"

No writer certainly has written more of Love and Sorrow than Mrs. Maclean. She touches scarcely any other strings. I called her the female Byron: in this respect she is particularly so. Passion and Sadness are the idols of her pen. She herself says

> "Sad were my shades: methinks they had
> Almost a tone of prophecy —
> I ever had, from earliest youth,
> A feeling what my fate would be."

Her love-passages are certainly not inferior to Byron's. I would cite the following lines from *The Improvvisatrice* in proof:

I lov'd him as a young Genius loves,
When its own mild and radiant heaven
Of starry thought burns with the light,
The love, the life, by passion given.
I loved him, too, as woman loves —
Reckless of sorrow, sin, or scorn:
Life had no evil destiny
That, with him, I could not have borne!
I had been nurs'd in palaces;
Yet earth had not a spot so drear,
That I should not have thought a home
In paradise, had he been near!
How sweet it would have been to dwell,
Apart from all, in some green dell
Of sunny beauty, leaves and flowers;
And nestling birds to sing the hours!
Our home, beneath some chestnut's shade
But of the woven branches made:
Our vesper hymn, the low lone wail
The rose hears from the nightingale;
And waked at morning by the call
Of music from a waterfall.
But not alone in dreams like this,
Breathed in the very hope of bliss,
I loved: my love had been the same
In hush'd despair, in open shame.
I would have rather been a slave,
In tears, in bondage by his side,

Than shared in all, if wanting him,
This world had power to give beside!
My heart was wither'd — and my heart
Had ever been the world to me:
And love had been the first fond dream,
Whose life was in reality.
I had sprung from my solitude,
Like a young bird upon the wing,
To meet the arrow: so I met
My poison'd shaft of suffering.
And, as that bird with drooping crest
And broken wing, will seek his nest,
But seek in vain: so vain I sought
My pleasant home of song and thought.
There was one spell upon my brain,
Upon my pencil, on my strain;
But one face to my colours came;
My chords replied to but one name —
Lorenzo! — all seem'd vow'd to thee
To passion, and to misery!

That Mrs. Maclean could paint Sorrow as well as she could delineate Love we have plenty of proof. Sorrow seems indeed an essential part of her nature. Persons who knew her intimately say that she was *not* naturally sad: that she was all gaiety and cheerfulness: but there is a mournfulness of soul which is never to be seen on the cheek or in the eye: and this I believe to have dwelt in Mrs. Maclean's breast more than in most people's. How otherwise are we to understand her poetry? We cannot believe her sadness to have been

put on like a player's garb: to have been an affectation, an unreality: it is too earnest for that. We must suppose that she *felt* what she wrote: and if so, her written sadness was real sadness. Take the following lines from *The Golden Violet:* no one can believe that the sentiment they contain is unreal.

SONG.

My heart is like the failing hearth
Now by my side;
One by one its bursts of flame
Have burnt and died.
There are none to watch the sinking blaze
And none to care,
Or if it kindle into strength,
Or waste in air.
My fate is as yon faded wreath
Of summer flowers:
They 've spent their store of fragrant health
On sunny hours,
Which reck'd them not, which heeded not
When they were dead;
Other flowers, unwarn'd by them
Will spring instead.
And my own heart is as the lute
I now am waking:
Wound to too fine and high a pitch,
They both are breaking.
And of their song what memory
Will stay behind?

An echo, like a passing thought
Upon the wind.
Silence, forgetfulness and rust,
Lute, are for thee;
And such my lot; neglect, the grave,
These are for me!

The same sad desolate tone pervades nearly all her compositions: but it invariably becomes intensest when she speaks of herself. We always see a shadow on her heart. The following lines beautifully illustrate this tendency:

Silent and dark is the source of yon river,
Whose birth-place we know not, and seek not to know,
Though mild as the flight of the shaft from yon quiver,
Is the course of its waves as in music they flow.

Oh, my heart, and my song, which is as my heart's flowing,
Read thy fate in yon river, for such is thine own!
'Mid those the chief praise on thy music bestowing,
Who cares for the lips from whence issue the tone?

Dark as its birth-place, so dark is my spirit,
Whence yet the sweet waters of melody come:
'T is the long after-course, not the source, will inherit
The beauty and glory of sunshine and fame.

And nothing seems able to "make a sunshine in this shady place." No burst of cheerfulness ever displays relief. Amidst every kind of scenery, and circum-

stance the darkness is the same. Her pensiveness is her familiar spirit. She delights in it:

"Call it madness, call it folly,
You cannot drive her gloom away,
There 's such a charm in melancholy,
She would not if she could be gay."

Sorrow must have been at the core of her heart, or she never could have written like this:

SONG.

Farewell, farewell! I 'll dream no more,
'T is misery to be dreaming:
Farewell, farewell; and I will be
At least like thee in seeming.
I will go forth to the green vale,
Where the sweet wild flowers are dwelling,
Where the leaves and the birds together sing,
And the woodland fount is welling.
Not there, not there, too much of bloom
Has Spring flung o'er each blossom;
The tranquil place too much contrasts
The unrest of my bosom.
I will go to the lighted halls,
Where midnight passes fleetest;
Oh, memory there too much recalls
Of saddest and of sweetest.
I 'll turn me to the gifted page,
Where the bard his soul is flinging;
Too well it echoes mine own heart
Breaking e'en while singing.

I must have rest! Oh, heart of mine,
When wilt thou lose thy sorrow?
Never, till in the quiet grave:
—Would I slept there to-morrow!

This strong tendency towards melancholy frequently led Mrs. Maclean into most erroneous views and sentiments; which, though we may make what excuses we will for them out of consideration for the author, should be heartily and honestly condemned for the sake of moral truth. For instance, when we find her saying—

Oh, when the grave shall open for me,—
(I care not how soon that time may be,—)
Never a rose shall grow on that tomb,
It breathes too much of hope and bloom;
But there be that flower's meek regret,
The bending and dark blue *Violet*—

when we read such passages as this, it is our duty to speak in terms of rebuke and repudiation. There is an evil spirit in such sentiments which should be bidden behind us. Why should we reject the blooming and beautiful, and cling after this poor fashion to the sad and sorrowful? It is false philosophy, we may be sure. Violets, indeed! Why, what were roses made for? To be slighted and contemned and despised, as it were, like this? Oh, no, no! Roses were made to gladden and delight us, and give us ideas of beauty and hope:

nay, more than this, to make us grateful to the Giver of all good besides.

Here is another instance of our fair author's tendency to look upon the dark side of life. In a little poem entitled *Change* she thus writes:

And this is what is left of youth!
There were two boys, who were bred up together,
Shared the same bed, and fed at the same board.
Each tried the other's sport, from their first chase,
Young hunters of the butterfly and bee,
To when they followed the fleet hare, and tried
The swiftness of the bird. They lay beside
The silver trout stream, watching as the sun
Play'd on the bubbles: shared each in the store
Of either's garden; and together read
Of *him*, the master of the desert isle,
Till a low hut, a gun and a canoe
Bounded their wishes. Or if ever came
A thought of future days, 't was but to say
That they would share each other's lot, and do
Wonders, no doubt. But this was vain; they parted
With promises of long remembrance, words
Whose kindness was the heart's, and those warm tears,
Hidden like shame by the young eyes that shed them,
But which are thought upon in after years
As what we would give worlds to shed once more.

They met again,—but different from themselves,—
At least what each remembered of themselves:
The one proud as a soldier of his rank,

And of his many battles: and the other
Proud of his Indian wealth, and of the skill
And toil which gather'd it: each with a brow
And heart alike darken'd by years and care.

They met with cold words and yet colder looks;
Each was chang'd in himself, and yet each thought
The other only chang'd, himself the same.
And coldness bred dislike; and rivalry
Came like the pestilence o'er some sweet thoughts
That linger'd yet, healthy and beautiful,
Amid dark and unkindly ones. And they
Whose boyhood had not known one jarring word,
Were strangers in their age: if their eyes met,
'T was but to look contempt, and when they spoke,
Their speech was wormwood!
—And this, this is life!

No! with all due respect to our fair poetess, this is *not* life. Doubtless there have been, and are, and long will be instances of brethren who have loved each other in childhood becoming strangers, almost haters, in manhood: but to assert that life is composed of such cases is to libel Providence and to dishearten man. Let the melancholy say what they will, enduring affection is not a fable, not a poet's dream: it is a high and a holy reality, one of the least deniable truths existing in the world: and only an erring or bewildered soul can doubt it.

Life! — No! Doubt and distrust, change and coldness, these are not *Life* — they form but the merest

fraction of life. LIFE! — a never-ending rush of varied, new-created, unsoiled moments, every one of which bears its freight of happiness, every one of which may be turned to our enjoyment if we please; countless bright fountains around us, from which pleasure never ceases to flow; friends to cheer, — kindred to bless, — flowers of beauty and sounds of infinite music to soothe and to charm — high hopes and glorious aspirations — the proud consciousness of Being and Thinking — and above all, the irrepressible expectation of a still brighter, more beautiful, more high and noble world; — this, though a poor and feeble picture, is at least more like life than the other. O, a glorious heritage Life is! TO LIVE! — what ineffable meaning there is in that short expression — *to live!* To be a part of never-ending Life! To be more immortal than worlds, — more eternal than the stars, — more indestructible than Nature, — more strong than Death: — to be a part of — to be joined to — the one great Everlasting Principle of Being: — what power, what glory, what majesty there is in the thought! Pain, sorrow, sin, evil, are *these* man's heritage and lot, then? No! Joy, Friendship, Affection, Hope — "this, *this* is Life;" — and that soul is not a true poet's soul which would seek to persuade us to the contrary.

Few writers are so picturesque as Mrs. Maclean. Her descriptions are perfect paintings, and often indeed give us a better idea of a scene than an actual representation of it. Some of her poetical illustrations of

the pictures in *Fisher's Drawing-Room Scrap-Book* are as superior in intelligence to the plates as a living being is to a marble statue.

The following poem will give a good general idea of Mrs. Maclean's picturesque manner.

THE SOLDIER'S FUNERAL.

And the muffled drum roll'd on the air,
Warriors with stately step were there;
On every arm was the black crape bound,
Every carbine was turn'd to the ground:
Solemn the sound of their measur'd tread,
As silent and slow they follow'd the dead.
The riderless horse was led in the rear,
There were white plumes waving over the bier,
Helmet and sword were laid on the pall,
For it was a Soldier's Funeral.

That soldier hath stood on the battle plain,
Where every step was over the slain;
But the brand and the ball had pass'd him by,
And he came to his native land to die.
'T was hard to come to that native land
And not clasp one familiar hand!
'T was hard to be number'd amid the dead,
Or ere he could hear his welcome said!
But 't was something to see its cliffs once more,
And to lay his bones on his own lov'd shore;
To think that the friends of his youth might weep
O'er the green grass turf of the soldier's sleep.

The bugles ceased their wailing sound
As the coffin was lower'd into the ground:
A volley was fired, a blessing said,
One moment's pause — and they left the dead!
— I saw a poor and an aged man,
His step was feeble, his lip was wan;
He knelt him down on the new rais'd mound,
His face was bow'd on the cold damp ground,
He rais'd his head, his tears were done,
The Father had pray'd o'er his only Son!

As a further specimen of Mrs. Maclean's descriptive power I present the following truly fine poem. Campbell would hardly have written better.

THE GRASP OF THE DEAD.

'T was in the battle-field, and the cold pale moon
Look'd down on the dead and dying;
And the wind pass'd o'er with a dirge and a wail
Where the young and brave were lying.

With his father's sword in his red right hand,
And the hostile dead around him,
Lay a youthful chief: but his bed was the ground,
And the grave's icy sleep had bound him.

A reckless rover, 'mid death and doom,
Pass'd a soldier, his plunder seeking;
Careless he stept, where friend and foe
Lay alike in their life-blood reeking.

Drawn by the shine of the warrior's sword,
The soldier paus'd beside it;
He wrench'd the hand with a giant's strength,
— But the grasp of the dead defied it.

He loos'd his hold, and his English heart
Took part with the dead before him;
And he honour'd the brave who died sword in hand,
As with soften'd brow he leant o'er him.

"A soldier's death thou hast boldly died,
A soldier's grave won by it:
Before I would take that sword from thine hand,
My own life's blood should dye it.

"Thou shalt not be left for the carrion crow,
Or the wolf to batten o'er thee;
Or the coward insult the gallant dead,
Who in life had trembled before thee."

Then dug he a grave in the crimson earth,
Where his warrior foe was sleeping;
And he laid him there in honour and rest,
With his sword in his own brave keeping!

There is far down in woman's heart a beautiful tendency and love towards the heroic, which does more to cultivate and extend that sentiment than the much fiercer but less pure passion for it which nerves the arm and fires the words of man. A noble deed always receives its best response of approbation from woman.

Woman sees the signs of true greatness far more readily than man. Mark how Mrs. Maclean celebrates a hero!

CRESCENTIUS.

I look'd upon his brow — no sign
Of guilt or fear was there;
He stood as proud by that death-shrine
As even o'er despair
He had a power; in his eye
There was a quenchless energy,
A spirit that could dare
The deadliest form that death could take,
And dare it for the daring's sake.

He stood — the fetters on his hand:
He raised them haughtily;
And had that grasp been on the brand,
It could not wave on high
With freer pride than it waved now;
Around he look'd with changeless brow
On many a torture nigh:
The rack, the chain, the axe, the wheel,
And, worst of all, his own red steel.

I saw him once before; he rode
Upon a coal-black steed;
And tens of thousands throng'd the road,
And bade their warrior speed;
His helm, his breastplate, were of gold,
And graved with many a dent, that told
Of many a soldier's deed;

The sun shone on his sparkling mail,
And danced his snow-plume on the gale.

But now he stood chain'd and alone,
The headsman by his side,
The plume, the helm, the charger gone;
The sword which had defied
The mightiest lay broken near;
And yet no sign or sound of fear
Came from that lip of pride;
And never king or conqueror's brow
Wore higher look than his did now.

He bent beneath the headsman's stroke
With an uncover'd eye;
A wild shout from the numbers broke
Who throng'd to see him die.
It was a people's loud acclaim,
The voice of anger and of shame,
A nation's funeral cry;
Rome's wail above her only son,
Her patriot and her latest one.

With one more extract I conclude. It is a Ballad called

SIR WALTER MANNY AT HIS FATHER'S TOMB.

"Oh, show me the grave where my father is laid,
Show his lowly grave to me;
A hundred pieces of broad red gold,
Old man, shall thy guerdon be."

With torch in hand, and barëd head,
The old man led the way:
And cold and shrill pass'd the midnight wind
Through his hair of silvery grey.

A stately knight follow'd his steps,
And his form was tall and proud;
And his step fell soft, and his helm was off,
And his head on his bosom bow'd.

They pass'd through the cathedral aisles,
Whose sculptur'd walls declare
The deeds of many a noble knight,
De Manny's name was not there.

They pass'd next a low and humble church,
Scarce seen amid the gloom;
There was many a grave, yet not even there
Had his father found a tomb.

They travers'd a bleak and barren heath,
Till they came to a gloomy wood;
Where the dark trees droop'd, and the dark grass grew,
As curs'd with the sight of blood.

There stood a lorn and blasted tree,
As heaven and earth were its foes,
And beneath was a piled-up mound of stones,
Where a rude grey cross arose.

"And lo!" said the ancient servitor,
"It is here thy father is laid;
No mass has bless'd the lowly grave,
Which his humblest follower made.

"I would have wander'd through every land
Where his gallant name was known,
To have pray'd a mass for the soul of the dead,
And a monumental stone.

"But I knew thy father had a son,
To whom the task would be dear;
Young knight, I kept the warrior's grave
For thee, and thou art here."

Sir Walter grasp'd the old man's hand,
But spoke he never a word; —
So still it was that the fall of tears
On his mailèd vest was heard.

Oh, the heart has all too many tears:
But none are like those that wait
On the blighted love, the loneliness
Of the young orphan's fate.

He call'd to mind when for knighthood's badge
He knelt at Edward's throne,
How many stood by a parent's side,
But he stood there alone!

He thought how often his heart had pined,
When his was the victor's name,
Thrice desolate, strangers might give,
But could not share, his fame.

Down he knelt in silent prayer
On the grave where his father slept;
And many the tears, and bitter the thoughts
As the warrior his vigil kept.

And he built a little chapel there,
And bade the deathbell toll,
And prayers be said, and mass be sung,
For the weal of the warrior's soul.

Years pass'd, and ever Sir Walter was first
Where warlike deeds were done;
But who would not look for the gallant knight
In the leal and loyal son?

MRS. ABDY

Is a well-known and very able contributor to many of our Annuals and Magazines. She has published a Volume of Poems, for private circulation, many of the pieces in which are distinguished by a purity of diction and loftiness of sentiment, which leave her little, if at all, behind the best writers among her sex. Mrs. Abdy is one of the many female poets who, like Mrs. Hemans, have consecrated their spiritual gifts to the service of religion. Her piety is fervent, without a tinge of bigotry: and her verse is full of that serenity and cheerfulness which only a warm faith can inspire.

THE DESTINY OF GENIUS.

"How often I have exclaimed, — 'I am not beloved as I love!'"
MISS LANDON.

Daughter of song! how truly hast thou spoken!
Yet deem not that to thee alone belong
Sad memories of idols crush'd and broken,
Of wounding falsehood, and of bitter wrong:
Oh! in thy cares, thy trials, I can trace
The lot appointed for thy gifted race.

Genius is all too lavish of its feelings,
It gives its tenderness of heavenly birth,
To waste its bright and beautiful revealings
On the dull common natures of the earth,

Casting the flowers of a celestial land,
To droop and wither upon barren sand.

And earth's cold children cherish not the treasure,
The pure and blessed offering they repel,
Busied in worldly toil, or worldly pleasure,
Their souls respond not to the hidden spell
Touch'd by a hand whose skilful power was given
As the peculiar boon of favouring Heaven.

And must it then be so? — must cold rejection
Still mock the heart where Genius warmly glows?
No! there is One on whom its deep affection
In fearless trusting ardour may repose;
Exhausting all the riches of its store,
Yet ever in return receiving more.

Yes: let it safely guard its true devotion
From the low commerce of the worthless sod,
Laying each fond and rapturous emotion
A tribute at the holy shrine of God:
Oh! where can gifted spirits wisely love,
Save when they fix their hopes on One above?

THE CHILD IN A GARDEN.

Child of the flaxen locks, and laughing eye,
Culling with hasty glee the flowerets gay,
Or chasing with light foot the butterfly,
I love to mark thee at thy frolic play.

Near thee I see thy tender father stand,
His anxious eye pursues thy roving track;
And oft with warning voice and beckoning hand,
He checks thy speed, and gently draws thee back.

Why dost thou meekly yield to his decree?
Fair boy, his fond regard to thee is known;
He does not check thy joys from tyranny —
Thou art his lov'd, his cherish'd, and his own.

When worldly lures, in manhood's coming hours,
Tempt thee to wander from discretion's way;
Oh! grasp not eagerly the offer'd flowers,
Pause if thy *Heavenly* Father bid thee stay.

Pause, and in Him revere a friend and guide,
Who does not willingly thy faults reprove,
But ever, when thou rovest from his side,
Watches to win thee back with pitying love.

WHERE SHALL I DIE?

Where shall I die? — Shall Death's cold hand
Arrest my breath while dear ones stand
In silent watchful love, to shed
Their tears around my quiet bed?
Or, shall I meet my final doom
Far from my country and my home?

Lord, to Thy will I bend the knee;
Thou evermore hast cared for me.

How shall I die? — Shall Death's harsh yoke
Subdue me by a single stroke?
Or shall my fainting frame sustain
The tedious languishing of pain,
Sinking in weariness away,
Slowly and sadly, day by day?
Lord, I repose my cares on Thee;
Thou evermore hast cared for me.

When shall I die? — Shall Death's stern call
Soon come, my spirit to appal?
Or shall I live through circling years,
A pilgrim in this vale of tears;
Surviving those I loved the best,
Who in the peaceful church-yard rest?
Lord! I await Thy wise decree;
Thou evermore hast cared for me.

Yet, oh, sustain me by Thy power!
Be with me in Life's parting hour;
Tell me of peace and pardon won
Through the dear mercies of Thy Son:
Then shall I feel resign'd to go
From Life's brief joy and fleeting woe,
If I in death the Saviour see,
Who evermore hath cared for me.

The subjoined lines on the death of Mrs. Hemans contain so fine an appreciation of that gifted lady's

genius, and furnish so noble a lesson to our Poetesses from one of their own number, that I am sure I shall be cheerfully pardoned for transcribing it.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF MRS. HEMANS.

Yes, she has left us. She, whose gifted lays
So nobly earned a nation's love and praise,
Entranced the high and lofty ones of earth,—
And shed a radiance o'er the peasant's hearth,
She from the world is taken. Her sweet lute
Hangs on the willow desolate and mute;
And while we half unconsciously repeat
Strains we have learned as household words to greet,
How mournful is the thought, that she can pour
Songs of such touching melody no more!

Oh! what a range of mind was hers, how bright
Her pages seemed with Inspiration's light;
And yet, though skilled to dazzle and o'erwhelm,
Queen of Imagination's fairy realm,
Her highest excellence appeared to be
In the calm region of reality.
In Nature's wondrous workings lay her art,
From that exhaustless mine, the human heart,
She brought her gems. 'T was hers, with gentle skill
The slumbering feelings to arouse and thrill;
With colours not more beautiful than true
The modest virtues of her sex she drew.
"Records of Woman." At that name arise
Fair shapes of truth and goodness to our eyes:

Not the gay phantoms seen in Fancy's trance,
Not the bright paragons of old romance,
Nor yet the wonders of a later age,
The heroines of Reason's formal page,
Full of cold, calculating, worldly sense,
And self-elate in moral excellence!
No — at Religion's pure and sacred flame
Her torch she kindled — 't was her wish and aim
That in her female portraits we should see
The blest effects of humble piety,
Proving that, in this world of sin and strife,
None could fulfil the charities of life,
Or bear its trials, save the path they trod
Were hallowed by the guiding grace of God.

And well her spirit in her life was shown,
No character more lovely than her own
Fell from her gifted pen — though numbers breathed
Her name, though laurel bands her brow enwreathed,
She sought not in the world's vain scenes to roam,
Her duties were her joys, her sphere was home:
And Memory still a pensive pleasure blends
With the affliction of her weeping friends,
When they recall the meek calm lowliness
With which she bore the blaze of her success:
But trials soon as well as triumphs came,
Sickness subdued her weak and languid frame,
Then was she patient, tranquil, and resigned,
Religion soothed and fortified her mind;
She knew that for the blessed Saviour's sake,
In whom she trusted, she should sleep to wake

In glory, and she yielded up her breath,
Feeling she won eternity by death.

Oh! may her holy principles impress
The soul of each surviving poetess;
No trivial charge is to her care consigned,
Who gives to public view her stores of mind:
Even though her sum of treasures may be small,
Good can be worked, if Heaven permit, by all:
She who a single talent holds in store,
By patient zeal may make that little more;
And though but few, alas! can boast the powers
Of her now lost, the gift may still be ours
Humbly to imitate her better part,
And strive to elevate each reader's heart
To themes of purer and of holier birth
Than the low pleasures and vain pomps of earth.
Never may Woman's lays their service lend
Vice to encourage, soften, or defend,
Nor may we in our own conceit be wise,
Weaving frail webs of mere moralities:
No, may we ever on His grace reflect,
To whom we owe our cherished intellect,
Deem that such powers in trust to us were given
To serve and glorify our Lord in heaven,
And place, amid the highest joys of fame,
Our best distinction in a Christian's name.

Mrs. Abdy's verses have invariably this great merit — that they are written with a purpose. She never fails to urge a truth, or enforce a duty, in her writings.

The subjoined poems are good illustrations of this assertion.

THE BUILDERS OF THE ARK.

The ark is on the waters, and one family alone,
Amid a lost and guilty race, its saving succour own;
Why are so few a number to the sacred shelter brought?
Where are the many builders who the wondrous structure wrought?

Alas! they laboured at their task with cold mechanic skill;
They had no hope of future grace, no fear of future ill;
Vainly the holy ark they view, vainly its refuge crave—
Others are by their efforts saved, themselves they cannot save.

May not the record of their fate a warning truth convey,
To some who in religion's cause unwearied zeal display?
Our anxious cares extend to all, our active works abound,
But say, within our secret hearts is true devotion found?

We send the blessed Book of Life to cheer the heathen's night,
But do we duly read and prize its words of hope and light?
Where bands of pious Christians meet we eagerly repair,
Do we with equal fervour breathe our solitary prayer?

The sinful we reclaim and warn, the ignorant we teach,
We place them in the narrow road, a land of joy to reach;
How dire the thought, that, while they bless their firm and friendly guide,
They may attain the gates of heaven, and miss us from their side!

Our prompt and ready labours may the praise of man demand;
Man judges of the spirit by the workings of the hand:
But God's unfailing wisdom seeks religion's hidden part,
And marks if true and vital faith be cherished in the heart.

Yet let us not unmindful of our erring brethren prove;
No, let increasing energy inspire our deeds of love,
But while to save another's soul our ardent zeal is shown,
O, let us watch with ceaseless care the welfare of our own!

THE DARKNESS OF EGYPT.

"But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings."—(*Exodus* x. 23.)

Lo! Moses stretcheth forth at God's command
His hand to heaven, and at the mystic sign
Thick darkness gathers over Egypt's land;
The glorious lights above no longer shine;
None knows another — each one rooted stays
By his sad hearth through these appalling days.

And do their captives share their mournful doom?
Must Israel's wretched children gaze in fear
On the dark horrors of surrounding gloom,
Making imprisonment's long hours more drear?
The judgment to redress their wrongs was sent,
And must they then partake the punishment?

They do not share it: favoured is the race
Of injured Israel, and the mists of night
Invade them not; each sees his dwelling-place
Cheered and illumed by its accustomed light:
Dim shadows the oppressor's home molest,
Yet reach not the abode of the opprest.

And thus, when darkness wraps the worldly crowd,
Sad aliens from the brightness of the word,
Its sullen influence shall never shroud
The true and faithful servants of the Lord;
Without them is the dreary gloom of sin,
But rays from heaven shall comfort them within.

False accusation, poverty, reproach,
Loss of loved friends, oppression, slavery, pain;
These darkening clouds their dwelling may approach,
Yet strive to quench its holy light in vain:
The flame shall brightly and securely shine,
Kindled and cherished by a hand divine.

And when, amid the gloomy vale of death,
Conscience the sinner's terrors shall enhance,
The firm believer shall, in steadfast faith,
Walk in the light of God's own countenance,
Cast off his bondage, and amid the blest,
Enjoy eternal light—eternal rest!

THE WHITE POPPY.

Thou hast no power to charm our eye,
Or aid us in our need,
Disdainfully we pass thee by,
Thou pale and worthless weed!
Bright flowers are near thy dwelling-place,
And corn is waving round,
Thou dost, but sadden and deface
This gay and fertile ground.

Yet hold—my censure I repress—
Thy wondrous juice contains
A spell to soothe in drowsiness
The weary sufferer's pains;
He sighs for sleep—in thought he shrinks
From night's long train of woes,
Till of thy lulling draught he drinks,
And sinks to soft repose.

What were to him the fragrant flowers
That lavish Nature yields,
What the rich vineyard's purple stores,
The harvest of the fields?
Scarce fruits improved by careful art,
Fair buds of varied dyes,
How would they mock his throbbing heart,
How cheat his aching eyes!

Let me no more with erring sense
God's mystic works arraign,
The mighty hand of Providence
Hath nothing made in vain;
Nor need I quit this lonely mead
His gracious love to scan,
Since even in a simple weed
I trace his care for man.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

The mystic science is not mine
That Eastern records teach;
I cannot to each bud assign
A sentiment and speech;
Yet, when in yonder blossomed dell
I pass my lonely hours,
Methinks my heart interprets well
The eloquence of flowers.

Of life's first thoughtless years they tell,
When half my joy and grief
Dwelt in a lily's opening bell,
A rosebud's drooping leaf—
I watched for them the sun's bright rays,
And feared the driving showers,
Types of my girlhood's radiant days
Were ye, sweet transient flowers.

And sadder scenes ye bring to mind,
The moments ye renew
When first the woodbine's wreaths I twined,
A loved one's grave to strew;
On the cold turf I weeping spread
My offering from the bowers,
Ye seemed meet tribute to the dead,
Pale, perishable flowers.

Yet speak ye not alone, fair band,
Of changefulness and gloom,
Ye tell me of God's gracious hand,
That clothes you thus in bloom,
And sends to soften and to calm
A sinful world like ours,
Gifts of such purity and balm
As ye, fresh dewy flowers.

And while your smiling ranks I view,
In vivid colours drest,
My heart, with faith confirmed and true,
Learns on the Lord to rest:
If He the lilies of the field
With lavish glory dowers,
Will he not greater bounties yield
To me, than to the flowers?

Still, still they speak — around my track,
Some faded blossoms lie,
Another spring shall bring them back,
Yet bring them, but to die:

But we forsake this world of strife,
To rise to nobler powers,
And share those gifts of endless life,
Withheld from earth's frail flowers.

O may I bear your lessons hence,
Fair children of the sod,
Yours is the calm mute eloquence,
That leads the thoughts to God:
And oft amid the great and wise,
My heart shall seek these bowers,
And turn from man's proud colloquies;
To commune with the flowers.

MISS ELIZA COOK.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this lady is a living writer of great celebrity. By the simple force of genius, and without any aid from adventitious circumstances, Miss Cook has pushed her way into the front rank of female talent, and stands acknowledged as one of the most attractive writers of song in our literature.

If I may venture to express somewhat plainly my estimate of Miss Cook's powers, I would say of her that hers is one of those strong, true-seeing, fearless souls, which, disdaining the aids of artificial refinement, and careless alike of censure and applause, present their thoughts in their first shape to the world, and give free bold utterance to every sentiment and feeling that they experience. There is no bowing to established opinion, no deprecation of criticism, no respect for conventionalism, in Miss Cook; and I for one highly admire and honour so frank and fearless and honest a writer.

Miss Cook has, I think, the boldest spirit of any Poetess in our language. Her single example goes far to prove that there is no sexuality in soul. I do not know a more unsexual style than hers. And the remark applies as much to the sentiment, too. The subjects of her verse, the thoughts it embodies, and the language in which she expresses herself, are all of the same free, sinewy, large, and massive nature. There is

no timidity, no reserve, no rounding-off in her poetry; but it is plain, and terse, and energetic, and muscular. It might all have been written by a man; and not better written either. She has a man's sense of freedom; a man's self-reliance; a man's sceptical spirit: a man's wide, grasping, general, original vision; and to these qualities she adds the quick instinctive perceptions, the pure love of Beauty, and the ardent, sensitive, affectionateness which so eminently distinguish woman.

As a sample of her sense of freedom, I quote

THE GIPSY'S TENT.

Our fire on the turf, and our tent 'neath the tree,
Carousing by moonlight, how merry are we!
Let the lord boast his castle, the baron his hall,
But the house of the gipsy is widest of all:
We may shout o'er our cups, and laugh loud as we will,
Till echo rings back from wood, welkin, and hill;
No joy seems to us like the joys that are lent
To the wanderer's life, and the gipsy's tent.

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Some crime and much folly may fall to our lot,
We have sins, and pray where is the one who has not?
We are rogues, arrant rogues; yet remember! 't is rare
We take but from those who can very well spare;
You may tell us of deeds justly branded with shame,
But if great ones heard truth you would tell them the same.
And there 's many a king would have less to repent,
If his throne were as pure as the gipsy's tent.

Pant ye for beauty? Oh, where would ye seek
Such bloom as is found on the tawny one's cheek?
Our limbs that go bounding in freedom and health,
Are worth *all* your pale faces and coffers of wealth:
There are none to control us: we rest or we roam;
Our will is our law, and the world is our home:
Even Jove would repine at *his* lot if he spent
A night of wild glee in the gipsy's tent.

I have more than once heard it said that the essential, somewhat scornful, freedom of thought and verse which is apparent in our author's works, is scarcely what we have been taught to look for in a female writer. It is pleasing, such critics say, from its piquancy: but that it is consistent with the common idea of the female character, they exceedingly doubt. It seems to be generally, and I think justly, held, that the female mind is intrinsically less radical, less revolutionary, than the male mind: and that it is far more disposed to acquiesce in the customs and conventions of society. But while I grant that we often find our fair author chanting the praises of gipsy lawlessness, and often unfashionably democratic, I perceive on the other hand no lack of that beautiful conservatism which so gracefully distinguishes woman, and which acts as so important a curb upon the levelling, destroying tendency of the rougher sex.

For myself, I highly admire Miss Cook's free spirit. I see in it a true originality, and an evidence of conscious

strength. I look upon her as one of the best and most powerful of all our female poets, and one who is greatly raising and purifying our estimate of woman's mind. She has by her example disproved the long prevalent dogma, that the female soul cannot rise above the trifling, minute, and evanescent affairs of life; and has clearly shown that when the mind of woman is emancipated from its petty restraints, and lifted above life's conventionalisms, it is at least as strong in essence, and as striking in its developments, as the mind of the male.

Amongst the prominent characteristics of Miss Cook's genius, the sound, healthy, cheerful nature of her philosophy, stands with the first. Female writers too frequently indulge in pensive, melancholy, morbid views of life, and thus tend rather to lower than to raise our estimate of humanity and nature. But Miss Cook is for making us happy. The bright side of our destiny is what she loves to dwell on, and she often urges her cheerful views with the happiest effect. I do not know where to find a better instance of this than in her Poem called

THE WORLD.

Talk who will of the world as a desert of thrall,
Yet, yet there is bloom on the waste;
Though the chalice of Life hath its acid and gall,
There are honey-drops, too, for the taste.

We murmur and droop should a sorrow-cloud stay,
And note all the *shades* of our lot;
But the rich rays of *sunshine* that brighten our way,
Are bask'd in, enjoy'd and forgot.

Those who look on Mortality's ocean aright,
Will not mourn o'er each billow that rolls;
But dwell on the beauties, the glories, the might,
As much as the shipwrecks and shoals.

How thankless is he who remembers alone
All the bitter, the drear and the dark;
Though the *raven* may scare with its woe-boding tone,
Do we ne'er hear the song of the *lark?*

We may utter farewell when 'tis torture to part,
But in meeting the dear one again
Have we never rejoic'd with that wildness of heart
Which outbalances ages of pain?

Who hath not had moments so laden with bliss,
When the soul in its fulness of love,
Would waver if bidden to choose between this
And the paradise promised above?

Though the eye may be dimmed with its grief-drop awhile,
And the whiten'd lip sigh forth its fear,—
Yet pensive indeed is that face where the smile
Is not oftener seen than the tear!

There are times when the storm-gust may rattle around,
  There are spots where the poison-shrub grows,
Yet are there not homes where nought else can be found
  But the southwind, the sunshine, and rose?

O haplessly rare is the portion that's ours,
  And strange is the path that we take,—
If there spring not beside us a few precious flowers,
  To soften the thorn and the brake.

The wail of regret, the rude clashing of strife,
  The soul's harmony often may mar,—
But I think we must own, in the discord of Life,
  'T is ourselves that oft waken the jar.

Earth is not *all* fair, yet it is not all gloom;
  And the voice of the grateful will tell
That He who allotted Pain, Death, and the Tomb,
  Gave Hope, Health, and the Bridal, as well.

Should Fate do its worst, and my spirit oppress'd,
  O'er its own shatter'd happiness pine,—
Let me witness the joy in another's glad breast,
  And some pleasure *must* kindle in mine!

Then say not the world is a desert of thrall,
  There is bloom, there is light, on the waste;
Though the chalice of Life hath its acid and gall,
  There are honey-drops, too, for the taste.

If further evidence of Miss Cook's cheerful spirit be needed, we may find it in the following fine Song.

WE'LL SING ANOTHER CHRISTMAS SONG.

We'll sing another Christmas song, for who shall ever tire,
To hear the olden ballad theme around a Christmas fire?
We'll sing another Christmas song, and pass the wassail cup,
For fountains that refresh the heart should never be dried up.
Ne'er tells us that each Yule tide brings more silver to our hair:
Time seldom scatters half the snow that quickly gathers there.
The goading of Ambition's thorns — the toiling heed of gold —
'T is these do more than rolling years in making us grow old:
Then shake Old Christmas by the hand — in kindness let him dwell,
For he's king of right good company, and we should treat him well.

Why should we let pale Discontent fling canker on the hours —
Unjust regrets lurk round the soul like snakes in leafy bowers;
And though the flood of Plenty's tide upon our lot may pour,
How oft the lip will murmur still the horse-leech cry for "more."

We sigh for wealth — we pant for place — and getting what we crave,
We often find it only coils fresh chains about the slave.
Year after year may gently help to turn the dark locks white,
But Time ne'er fades a flower so soon as cold and worldly blight:
Then shake Old Christmas by the hand — in kindness let him dwell,
For he's king of right good company, and we should treat him well.

Be glad — be glad — stir up the blaze, and let our spirits yield
The incense that is grateful as the lilies of the field;
"Good will to all" — 't is sweet and rich, and helps to keep away
The wrinkled pest of frowning brows — and mildew shades of grey.
Be glad — be glad — and though we have some cypress in our wreath,
Forget not there are rosebuds too, that ever peep beneath.
And though long years may line the cheek, and wither up the heart,
It is not Time, but selfish Care, that does the saddest part:
Then shake Old Christmas by the hand — in kindness let him dwell,
For he's king of right good company, and we should treat him well.

Miss Cook excels greatly in pathos. No pathos can be finer. There is nothing maudlin or whining in it;

but it is always true, deep and unaffected. The following poem has always appeared to me very beautiful and touching.

THE MOURNERS.

King Death sped forth in his dreaded power,
To make the most of his silent hour;
And the first he took was a white rob'd girl,
With the orange bloom twin'd in each glossy curl;
The fond betroth'd hung o'er her bier,
Bathing her shroud with the gushing tear;
He madly raved, he shriek'd his pain,
With frantic speech and burning brain;
"There's no joy," said he, "now my dearest is gone;
Take, take, me Death! for I cannot live on!"

The *Sire* was robb'd of his eldest born,
And he bitterly bled while the branch was torn;
Other scions were round, as good and fair,
But none seem'd so bright as the deathless heir.
"My hopes are crush'd," was the father's cry;
Since my darling is lost, I, too, would die!"
The valued *Friend* was snatch'd away,
Bound to another from childhood's day;
And the one that was left exclaimed in despair,
"Oh, he sleeps in the tomb, let me follow him there!"

A *Mother* was taken, whose constant love
Had nestled her child like a fair young dove;
And the heart of that child to the mother had grown,
Like the ivy to oak, or the moss to the stone;

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Nor loud nor wild was the burst of woe,
But the tide of anguish was strong below;
And the reft one turn'd from all that was light,
From the flowers of day, and the stars of night,—
Breathing where none might hear or see,
"Where thou art, my mother! thy child would be!"

Death smil'd as he heard each earnest word —
"Nay, nay," said he, "be this work deferr'd;
I'll see thee again in a fleeting year,
And if grief and devotion live on sincere,
I promise thee then thou shalt share in the rest
Of the being pluck'd from thy doting breast;
Then if thou cravest the coffin and pall,
As thou dost this moment, my spear *shall* fall!"
— And Death fled: — till Time on his rapid wing,
Gave the hour that brought back the skeleton king.

But the Lover was ardently wooing again,
Kneeling in serfdom, and proud of his chain;
He had found an idol to adore,
Rarer than that he had worshipp'd before;
His step was gay, his laugh was loud,
As he led the way for the bridal crowd;
And his brow own'd not a moment's shade,
Though he pass'd o'er the grave where his lost love laid:
"Ha, ha!" cried Death, "'t is passing clear
That I am a guest not wanted here!"

The *Father* was seen in his children's games,
Kissing their flush'd brows, and blessing their names;

And his eye grew bright as he mark'd the charms
Of the boy at his knee and the girl in his arms;
His voice rang out in the merry noise,
He was first in all their hopes and joys;
He ruled their sports in the setting sun,
Nor gave a thought to the missing one!
"Are ye ready?" cried Death, as he raised his dart,—
"Nay, nay," shriek'd the father, "in mercy depart!"

The *Friend* again was quaffing the bowl,
Warmly pledging his faith and soul;
His bosom cherish'd with glowing pride,
A stranger form that sat by his side;
His hand the hand of that stranger press'd,
He prais'd his song, he echoed his jest;
And the mirth and wit of that new found mate,
Made a blank of the name so priz'd of late:
"See, see!" cried Death, as he hurried past,
"How bravely the bonds of friendship last!"

But the *Orphan-Child*,—oh, where was she?
With clasping hands, and bending knee,
All alone on the churchyard sod,
Mingling the names of "Mother" and "God;"
Her dark and sunken eye was hid,
Fast weeping beneath the swollen lid;
Her sigh was heavy, her forehead was chill,
Betraying the wound was unhealëd still;
And her smother'd prayer was heard to crave
A speedy home in the self-same grave.

Hers was the love all holy and strong,
Hers was the sorrow fervent and long;
Hers was the spirit whose light was shed
As an incense fire above the dead.
Death linger'd there,— and paus'd awhile,
But she beckon'd him on with a welcoming smile;
"There's a solace," cried he, "for all others to find,
But a mother leaves no equal behind!"
— And the kindest blow Death ever gave,
Laid the mourning child in its parent's grave.

I think that none of our female writers surpass Miss Cook in strength and force of style. Miss Landon's verse may be as showy, — nay it is more so; but it has none of the sustained power that characterizes Miss Cook's: Mrs. Howitt's resembles it, but it has a soft garb which quite marks the sex of the writer, and which scarcely ever distinguishes Miss Cook's. There is in Miss Cook that fine eloquence which grows as it advances. There is a gradual deepening in the following powerful lines, that reminds one of a widening river, rolling broader and deeper towards the sea:

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone." — (*St. John*, Chap. 8, verse 7th.)

Beautiful eloquence, thou speakest low,
But the world's clashing cannot still thy tones;
Thou livest, as the stream with gentle flow
Runs through the battle-field of strife and groans.

Thine is the language of a simple creed,
Whose saving might has no priest-guarded bound,
If soundly learn'd, say would the martyr bleed?
Or such dense shadows fall on "hallowed ground?"
Oh, how we boast our knowledge of "the Right,"
But blast the Christian grain with Conduct's blight.

'T is well to ask our Maker to "forgive
Our trespasses;" but 't is as we may bear
The trespasses of those who breathe and live
Amid the same Temptation, Doubt and Care.
Oh! ye, who point so often to the herd
Whose dark and evil works are all uncloaked,
Is there no other than condemning word,
For minds untaught and spirits sorely yoked?
Are ye quite sure no hidden leper taint
Blurs your own skin if we look through the paint.

Ye throw from ambush! — let Truth's noontide light
Flash on the strength that nerves such eager aims,
Bring pigmy greatness from its giant height,
Where would be then the splendour of your names?
Ye harsh denouncers, 't is an easy thing
To wrap yourselves in Cunning's specious robes,
And sharpen all the polished blades ye fling,
As though ye held diploma for the probes:
But if the charlatan and knave were dropp'd,
Some spreading trees would be most closely lopp'd.

Ye, that so fiercely show your warring teeth
At every other being on your way,
Is your own sword so stainless in its sheath,
That ye can justify the braggart fray?

The tricks of policy — the hold of place —
The dulcet jargon of a courtly rote —
The sleek and smiling mask upon the face —
The eye that sparkles but to hide its mote:
Tell me, ye worms, could ye well bear the rub,
That tore these silken windings from the grub?

Ye lips, that gloat upon a brother's sin,
With moral mouthing in the whisper'd speech,
Methinks I've seen the poison fang within,
Betray the viper rather than the leech.
I've marked the frailties of some gifted one,
Blazon'd with prudent doubt and virtuous sigh,
But through the whining cant of saintly tone,
Heard Joy give Pity the exulting lie,
As if it were a pleasant thing to find,
The racer stumbling and the gaze-hound blind.

Too proud, — too ignorant, — too mighty Man —
Why dost thou so forget the lesson taught?
Why not let Mercy cheer our human span?
Ye say ye serve Christ — heed him as ye ought:
He did not goad the weeping child of clay,
He heaped no coals upon the erring head,
Fixed no despair upon the sinner's way,
And dropp'd no gall upon the sinner's bread:
He heard Man's cry for Vengeance, but he flung
Man's Conscience at the yell, and hushed the tongue.

Great teaching from a greater teacher — fit
To breathe alike to Infancy and Age:
No garbled mystery o'ershadows it,
And noblest hearts have deepest read the page.

Carve it upon the mart and temple arch,
Let our fierce judges read it as they go,
Make it the key-note of Life's pompous march,
And trampling steps will be more soft and slow.
For God's own voice says from the Eternal throne,
"Let him that is without sin cast the stone."

One more passage, and I conclude my extracts from Miss Cook's writings. The lines are noble ones, and full of the true poet's fire.

LOVE.

Love, beautiful and boundless Love — oh! who shall hymn thy praise?
Who shall exalt thy hallow'd name with fitting anthem lays?
When shall thy workings all be seen — thy power all revealed?
Oh! who shall count thy fairy steps upon Earth's rugged field?

There are few things of gloom that meet our Sorrow or our Hate,
Where Love and Beauty have not once been portion of their state;
Few things are seen in charmless guise that shutteth out all trace
Of God's infinitude of Joy, of Purity, and Grace.

There's not a palsied ruin bows its patriarchal head,
Which has not rung with Triumph shouts while Revel banquets spread;

There's not a desolated hearth but where the cheerful pile
Of blazing logs has sparkled and the cricket sung the while.

The broken mandolin that lies in silent, slow decay,
Has quicken'd many a gentle pulse that heard its measures play;
The stagnant pool that taints and kills the mallow and the rush,
Has filtered through the silver clouds and cool'd the rainbow's flush.

There's not a dark, dull coffin-board but what has stood to bear
A swarm of summer warblers in the mellow greenwood air;
There's not a thread of cere-cloth but has held its blossom bells,
And swung the morning pearls about within the fragrant wells.

Love lurketh round us everywhere — it fills the great design,
It gives the soul its chosen mate — it loads the autumn vine;
It dyes the orchard branches red — it folds the worm in silk,
It rears the daisy where we tread, and bringeth corn and milk.

Love stirreth in our beings all unbidden and unknown,
With aspirations leaping up like fountains from the stone;
It prompts the great and noble deeds that nations hail with pride,
It moveth when we grieve to miss an old dog from our side.

It bids us plant the sapling to be green when we are grey,
It pointeth to the Future, and yet blesses while we stay;
It opens the Almighty page where — though 't is held afar,
We read enough to lure us on still higher than we are.

The child at play upon the sward who runs to snatch a flower,
With earnest passion in his glee that glorifies the hour —
The doting student — pale and meek — who looks into the night
Dreaming of all that helps the soul to gauge Eternal might; —

The rude, bold savage, pouring forth his homage to the sun,
Asking for other "hunting fields" when life's long chase is run —
The poet boy who sitteth down upon the upland grass,
Whose eagle thoughts are nestled by the Zephyr wings that pass; —

The weak old man that creepeth out once more before he dies
With longing wish to see and feel the sunlight in his eyes —
Oh! these are the unerring types that Nature setteth up,
To tell that an Elixir drop yet sanctifies our cup.

Love, beautiful and boundless Love, thou dwellest here below,
Teaching the human lip to smile — the violet to blow;
Thine is the breath ethereal that yet exhales and burns
In sinful breasts as incense steals from dim unsightly urns.

Thou art the holy record seal that Time can ne'er annul,
The dove amid the vulture tribe — the lamp within the skull —
Thou art the one bright Spirit Thing that is not bought and sold,
The cherub elve that laugheth in the giant face of Gold.

Love — exquisite, undying Love — runs through Creation's span,
Gushing from countless springs to fill the ocean heart of Man;
And there it broadly rolleth on in deep unfathomed flood,
Swelling with the Immortal Hope that craveth more of "Good."

It is the rich magnetic spark yet shining in the dust,
The fair salvation ray of Faith that wins our joyful trust,
The watchword of the Infinite, left here to lead above,
That's ever seen and ever heard, and tells us "GOD IS LOVE."

FRANCES ANNE BUTLER.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Mrs. Butler is the late Miss Fanny Kemble. Her literary abilities have been variously manifested. Prose, Verse, and Drama, have alike engaged her; and in all she has attracted a large share of public attention and applause: with her *poetical* genius, however, we have alone to do on the present occasion.

I venture to say that Mrs. Butler's poetry may safely challenge comparison with the verse of most female writers in our literature. I do not say that it has the softness of Mrs. Hemans's, the delightful simplicity of Mary Howitt's, or the sweet gracefulness of Miss Mitford's,—"one star *differeth* from another star in glory,"—but it has character and individualism: it displays immense intellectual power; sympathies of a pure, high, unaffected order; and what, in these days (as in all), is one of the greatest possible excellencies, a thorough hatred and avoidance of all hypocrisy, pretence, and cant. I never met with a more natural writer; and, surely, where there is honesty of soul, a few sins against taste may be pardoned. Mrs. Butler's faults proceed not from a deficiency, but from a redundancy, of power; which is a very excusable, inasmuch as it is a very uncommon, failing. I believe that in the

course of a few years, when time shall have sobered down the perhaps too-vividly painted lines of her mental character, and shall have corrected her hasty estimates of the world and of humanity, Mrs. Butler will rank with the foremost poets of our land.

The following verses will fairly represent Mrs. Butler's energetic, thoughtful, picturesque style. Byron has no grander impersonations.

I.

AUTUMN.

I hear a voice low in the sunset woods:
Listen; it says "Decay, decay, decay:"
I hear it in the murmuring of the floods,
And the wind sighs it as it flies away.
Autumn is come; seest thou not in the skies
The stormy light of his fierce lurid eyes?
Autumn is come; his brazen feet have trod,
Withering and scorching, o'er the mossy sod.
The fainting year sees her fresh flowry wreath
Shrivel in his hot grasp; his burning breath
Dries the sweet water-springs that in the shade
Wandering along, delicious music made.
A flood of glory hangs upon the world,
Summer's bright wings shining ere they are furl'd.

II.

WINTER.

I saw him on his throne, far in the North,
Him ye call Winter, picturing him ever

An aged man, whose frame, with palsied shiver
Bends o'er the fiery element, his foe.
But him I saw was a young god whose brow
Was crown'd with jagged icicles, and forth
From his keen spirit-like eyes there shone a light
Broad, glaring, and intensely cold and bright.
His breath, like sharp-edged arrows, pierced the air;
The naked earth crouch'd shuddering at his feet;
His finger on all murmuring waters sweet
Lay icily,—motion nor sound was there;
Nature seem'd frozen—dead; and still and slow
A winding-sheet fell o'er her features fair,
Flaky and white from his wide wings of snow.

Mrs. Butler's plays scarcely come within the scope of the present work, for there is not much that is poetical in them. They exhibit a quick discerning eye, a bold fancy, and a firm, determined, wide-grasping intellect: but they want the compression and cohesion which only practice can give.

That our fair Authoress has however an eminently dramatic mind cannot I think be doubted for a moment. Her poems are essentially dramatical: terse, vigorous, graphic, and impersonative. The following Ballad is a perfect drama.

BALLAD.

The Lord's son stood at the clear spring head,
The May on the other side;
"And stretch me your lily hand," he said,
"For I must mount and ride."

"And waft me a kiss across the brook,
And a curl of your yellow hair;
Come summer or winter, I never shall look
Again on your eyes so fair.

"Bring me my coal-black steed, my squire,
Bring Fleet-foot forth," he cried;
"For three-score miles he must not tire
To bear me to my bride.

"His foot must be swift though my heart be slow,
He carries me towards my sorrow;
To the Earl's proud daughter I made my vow,
And I must wed her to-morrow."

The Lord's son stood at the altar-stone,
The Earl's proud daughter near:
"And what is that ring you have gotten on,
That you kiss so oft and so dear?

"Is it a ring of the yellow gold,
Or something more precious and bright?
Give me that ring in my hand to hold,
Or I plight ye no troth to-night!"

"It is not a ring of the yellow gold,
But something more precious and bright;
But never shall hand, save my hand, hold
This ring by day or night."

"And now I am your wedded wife,
Give me the ring, I pray."—
"You may take my lands, you may take my life,
But never this ring away."

They sat at the board, and the lady bride
Red wine in a goblet pour'd;
" And pledge me a health, sweet sir," she cried,
" My husband and my lord."

The cup to his lips he had scarcely press'd,
When he gasping drew his breath;
His head sank down on his heaving breast,
And he said " It is death! it is death!

" Oh, bury me under the gay green shaw,
By the brook, 'neath the heathery sod,
Where last her blessed eyes I saw,
Where her blessed feet last trod!"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

A VERY considerable number of our Female Poets have distinguished themselves by their *learning*. From the time of Lady Berners down to the present day, scholastic acquirements have attracted many of our female writers. Lady Berners herself, Lady Jane Grey, Queen Elizabeth, Lady Carew, the Countess of Pembroke, the Duchess of Newcastle, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Miss Carter, and other lady authors, may be instanced.

Our own day has its examples of the same fact. Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Howitt, and Miss Mitford all display great classical knowledge and lingual proficiency. And the distinguished lady whose name heads this Chapter, Mrs. Robert Browning, formerly Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, is a fresh illustration of the assertion. I think it may be said that she is chief amongst the learned poetesses of our land: at least, I know of no British female writer who exhibits so intimate an acquaintance with the *spirit* of both antique and modern philosophy, or so refined a perception of intellectual purity and beauty. Her poetry is the poetry of pure reason.

It may be a question, however, whether an intense devotion to scholastic learning is not rather injurious than beneficial to the female mind. It cannot be pre-

tended, of course, that school-craft, and the philosophy of art, science, and reason, ought to be altogether overlooked and unstudied by woman: — the proposition would be monstrous. But it may perhaps be fairly argued that, as woman's faculties are rather perceptive than investigative, and as her knowledge of truth is rather intuitive than acquired, there is a possibility of her understanding being injured by over-cultivation. Just as some flowers lose their native beauty when forced by horticultural art, may the female mind be spoiled by excess of intellectual culture.

Far as we should carry female education, we should, I think, take especial care not to found it on the same studies as appear necessary to man's. The acquirements of the sexes must be kept *unlike*, or man will find in woman, not a help meet, but a rival. Harmony results not from similarity, but from difference; and the law applies as much to the mental as to the physical world. Two minds exactly alike would soon grow tired of each other; for each would see in the other only the continual reflexion of its own image, and would be like a person condemned to behold no human face but that which he saw in his mirror.

Further, the spheres of the sexes are different, and require different faculties, and different education. The man — "for contemplation formed" — should learn by study, and reflection, and comparison, and investigation; the woman — "for softness formed and sweet attractive grace" — should acquire knowledge mainly through

her rapid instincts, her wide-spreading sympathies, and her quick instantaneous perceptions.

The male and female minds arrive at truth by different roads. Man reaches it by proof; woman by faith. Man knows it; woman feels it. Man demonstrates it; woman believes it. Mary recognised the risen Christ when He spake to her; Thomas would not believe until he had thrust his finger into the Saviour's side.

Science, then, and learning, the logical *signs* of knowledge, are means comparatively of but little value to the female mind in its acquisition of truth, and in excess tend rather to cloud and confuse than to enlighten and inform it.

In proof of these remarks I think I can fairly say that learned poetesses, however great their genius, have rarely been so effective and popular as less cultivated writers, possessed of even smaller natural powers. How charmingly, for instance, Katherine Philips shines out from the thick cluster of learned ladies who surround her! Her *Ode against Pleasure* is worth all that her more showy sisters produced altogether. Hers is moral knowledge; theirs intellectual: hers feeling; theirs logic. Mrs. Opie, again, contrasts sweetly with Miss Carter, Mrs. More, and other erudite ladies of that era. Her poem, *The Orphan Boy*, will outweigh all the learned odes produced by the female minds of her generation.

To come however (at last) to the lady whose poetical

works this Chapter proposes to consider, I scruple not to say that she is certainly most effective in her least laboured compositions. Her genius, it is impossible not to see, is of the highest order—strong, deep-seeing, enthusiastic and loving; but although all her compositions prove this, I find the greatest evidences of her powers in her most unpretending works. Where there is effort, there is often obscurity; but where she gives her soul free unconscious vent, she writes with a truth and force of touch which none of the poetic sisterhood surpass.

In justification of the opinion which I have here expressed, I would particularly instance the poem called *A Drama of Exile.* The intellect displayed in this noble production is stupendous. The conception is massive; the treatment of the prominent idea truly consistent and powerful; the pathos such as only a woman could have written; and the moral tone of the work most lofty and pure. But, in spite of all these excellencies, the poem often fatigues us. It keeps the mind too much on the stretch; requires an unceasing exercise of our deepest thoughts; and while we never fail at last to see the extreme beauty of the writer's ideas, we grow tired in studying them. The following *Chorus of Eden Spirits,* highly poetical as it is, may be cited as an illustration of my argument. It will be seen how far the meaning often lies beneath the surface: —

Hearken, oh hearken! let your souls, behind you,
Lean, gently moved!
Our voices feel along the Dread to find you,
O lost, beloved!
Through the thick-shielded and strong-marshall'd angels,
They press and pierce:
Our requiems follow fast on our evangels, —
Voice throbs in verse!
We are but orphan'd Spirits left in Eden,
A time ago —
God gave us golden cups; and we were bidden
To feed you so!
But now our right hand hath no cup remaining,
No work to do;
The mystic hydromel is spilt, and staining
The whole earth through;
And all those stains lie clearly round for showing
(Not interfused!)
That brighter colours were the world's foregoing,
Than shall be used.
Hearken, oh hearken! ye shall hearken surely,
For years and years,
The noise beside you, dripping coldly, purely,
Of spirit's tears!
The yearning to a beautiful, denied you,
Shall strain your powers: —
Ideal sweetnesses shall over-glide you,
Resumed from ours!
In all your music, our pathetic minor
Your ears shall cross;
And all fair sights shall mind you of diviner,
With sense of loss!

We shall be near, in all your poet-languors
And wild extremes;
What time ye vex the desert with vain angers,
Or light with dreams!
And when upon you, weary after roaming,
Death's seal is put,
By the foregone ye shall discern the coming,
Through eyelids shut.

But in justice to Mrs. Browning we must confess that her lofty ideality is far oftener an excellence than a blemish. It is only from such a mind as hers that we can get a conception like that contained in Gabriel's reply to the taunt of Lucifer, regarding "the vacant thrones in heaven."

"Angel, there are no vacant thrones in heaven
To suit thy bitter words. Glory and life
Fulfil their own depletions: *and if God*
Sigh'd you far from Him, His next breath drew in
A compensative splendour up the skies,
Flushing the starry arteries."

To the same refining faculty we owe such passages as this which follows: —

The essence of all beauty I call love.
The attribute, the evidence, and end,
The consummation to the inward sense,
Of beauty apprehended from without,
I still call love. As form, when colourless,
Is nothing to the eye: that pine-tree there,

Without its black and green, being all a blank;
So, without love, is beauty undiscern'd,
In man or angel.

Mrs. Browning proves the genuineness of her poetic fire in nothing more clearly than in her high estimate of poetry, and in her just appreciation of other poets. Poetry is quite other than a plaything to her: it is the earnest serious business of her life. She has Milton's high sense of the nobility of song; and, by the way, much of Milton's lofty imaginative power and daring. Her estimate of the chief poets of the world is singularly just and discriminating: in her *Vision of Poets* some of the portraits are painted as with a lightning-flash. One of the stanzas speaks of

—— "Shelley, in his white ideal,
All statue blind."

I think that portrait perfect. In another she points

"To Shakspere! on whose forehead climb
The crowns of the world! O eyes sublime!
With tears and laughters for all time!"

Schlegel and Hazlitt together have not said more than that.

One of the chief characteristics of Mrs. Browning's poetry is the unvarying elevation of its thought and sentiment. There is never a grovelling or earthy idea in it; it all tends upward: and sometimes, in its pure,

unwavering morality, approaches the sacred words of inspiration. The following is very loftily conceived: —

THE MEASURE.

"He comprehendeth the dust of the earth in a measure."— *Isaiah*, xl.
"Thou givest them tears to drink in a measure."— *Psalm*, lxxx.

God, the Creator, with a pulseless hand
Of unoriginated power, hath weigh'd
The dust of earth and tears of man, in one
Measure, and by one weight; —
So saith His Holy Book.

Shall we, then, who have issued from the dust
And there return; shall *we*, who toil for dust,
And wrap our winnings in this dusty life,
Say "No more tears, Lord God!
The measure runneth o'er?"

O holder of the balance, laughest Thou?
Nay, Lord! be gentler to our foolishness,
For His sake who assumed our dust, and turns
On Thee pathetic eyes,
Still moisten'd with our tears!

And teach us, O our Father, while we weep,
To look all patiently on earth, and learn —
Waiting in that meek gesture, till at last
These tearful eyes be fill'd
With the dry dust of death!

Mrs. Browning is never more successful than when reflecting on some calm sweet promise of Scripture. Her womanly faith and trust then rise superior to all earthly thoughts, and inspire her with most pure and holy utterances. I know scarcely any poem that has a more soothing and sustaining influence than that which she calls —

THE SLEEP.

"He giveth His beloved sleep."—*Psalm*, cxxvii. 2.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar
Along the Psalmist's music deep —
Now tell me if that any is
For gift or grace, surpassing this —
"He giveth His belovëd sleep?"

What would we give to our belov'd?
The hero's heart, to be unmov'd —
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep —
The senate's shout to patriot vows —
The monarch's crown to light the brows?
"He giveth *His* belovëd, sleep."

What do we give to our belov'd?
A little faith, all undisprov'd —
A little dust, to over-weep —
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake?
"He giveth *His* belovëd, sleep."

"Sleep soft, belov'd!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
Sad dust that through the eyelids creep:
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
"He giveth *His* belovëd, sleep."

O Earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvëd gold! the wailer's heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God makes a silence through you all,
"And giveth His belovëd, sleep!

His dews drop mutely on the hill:
His cloud above it resteth still,
Though on its slope men toil and reap!
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
"He giveth His belovëd, sleep!"

Yea! men may wonder when they scan
A living, thinking, feeling man,
In such a rest his heart to keep:
But angels say — and through the word
I ween their blessed smile is *heard* —
"He giveth His belovëd, sleep!"

For me, my heart, that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,

That sees through tears the juggler's leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on *His* love repose,
"Who giveth His belovëd, sleep!

And friends! dear friends! when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep, —
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall —
He giveth His belovëd, sleep!"

One of Mrs. Browning's most effective poems, and the last I shall quote, is founded upon a touching incident in the history of her present majesty.

When Queen Victoria was informed of her accession to the throne on the death of her uncle, she was so affected with the consciousness of the heavy responsibilities which had in a moment fallen upon her, that she wept.

Only a woman could have versified that incident as Mrs. Browning has done.

VICTORIA'S TEARS.

O maiden! heir of kings!
A king has left his place;
The majesty of Death has swept
All other from his face!
And thou, upon thy mother's breast,
No longer lean adown,

But take the Glory for the Rest,
And rule the land that loves thee best.
She heard and wept —
She wept to wear a crown!

They deck'd her courtly halls;
They rein'd her hundred steeds;
They shouted at her palace gate
"A noble Queen succeeds!"
Her name has stirr'd the mountain's sleep,
Her praise has fill'd the town,
And mourners God had stricken deep,
Look'd hearkening up, and did not weep.
Alone she wept,
Who wept, to wear a crown!

She saw no purples shine,
For tears had dimm'd her eyes;
She only knew her childhood's flowers
Were happier pageantries!
And while her heralds play'd their part,
Those million shouts to drown —
"God save the Queen" from hill to mart,
She heard through all her beating heart,
And turn'd and wept —
She wept to wear a crown!

God save thee, weeping Queen!
Thou shalt be well beloved!
The tyrant's sceptre cannot move
As those pure tears have moved!

The nature in thine eyes we see
That tyrants cannot own —
The love that guardeth liberties!
Strange blessing on the nation lies,
Whose sovereign wept —
Yea, wept to wear a crown!

God bless thee! weeping Queen!
With blessing more divine!
And fill with happier love than earth's
That tender heart of thine!
That when the thrones of earth shall be
As low as graves brought down, —
A piercëd hand may give to thee
The Crown which angels shout to see!
Thou wilt *not* weep
To wear that heavenly crown!

MISS CHARLOTTE YOUNG.

THIS lady, who has very recently published her first volume of poetry (*The World's Complaint, and other Poems*), bids fair to display, indeed may be said to display already, poetical powers of the highest order; and to take a very distinguished place among the poetesses of the present generation. She has a large share of Eliza Cook's spirit; she possesses much of Mrs. Hemans's grace, with more force; and all Miss Landon's eloquent facility, with greater purity of sentiment.

I do not know where, in all the writings of our Female Poets, to find a more melodious, simple-hearted and instructive little poem than this: —

THE BIRD AND THE FOUNTAIN.

There was once a little Fountain,
That flow'd away unseen,
In the bosom of a mountain,
Where man had never been;
Yet on it wander'd brightly,
With a pretty bubbling sound,
Whilst its waters sprinkled lightly
The plants that grew around.

But one evening, at the "gloaming,"
A Swallow, pert and vain,
From far distant countries roaming,
Came soaring o'er the plain;
And staying by the mountain,
To rest his weary wing,
To that pretty little Fountain
He thus began to sing: —

"Poor humble thing, and lowly,
Confined to one lone spot,
Condemn'd to suffer slowly
Thy solitary lot!
Oh! had you seen the bowers
O'er which I 've lately flown,
How poor you 'd think the flowers
That blossom here alone!

"For there, 'midst scenes of splendour
A fountain's life should run,
And all its sweetness render
Beneath an Eastern sun;
There should your cooling waters,
In fragrance and perfume,
Descend to bless the daughters
Of Oriental bloom."

The little Fountain listen'd,
And, for a moment's space,
Perhaps less brightly glisten'd
In her lonely hiding-place:

Perchance the swallow's measure
A passing shadow threw
On every simple pleasure
Her humble spirit knew.

And soon that pretty Fountain,
Once happy and content,
Perchance had scorn'd the mountain
Where all her life was spent,
Had not a thirsty flower
Just caught her sparkling eye,
Who, but for her sweet shower,
Must pine away and die.

Oh, then she said, "Pert stranger,
I do not envy thee,
Though o'er those scenes a ranger,
Which I may never see;
Since in my quiet flowing
I 've joys to thee unknown,
The bliss of bliss bestowing, —
The sweetest ever known!"

She said, and soft reclining
Within her crystal bed,
She kissed that flow'ret pining,
And raised its drooping head.
The Swallow and his story
Were soon forgotten quite,
For *his* was fading glory,
And *hers* enduring light!

There is something perfectly feminine in the foregoing passage. A man could not have written it. The sweet placidity of the sentiment is such as a woman only could indite: and nothing can be more charming than the effect produced by it.

The following lines contain, I think, a noble burst of womanly philosophy:—

EVERY-DAY HEROES.

We speak and we read of the hero's deeds,
And envy perchance his fame;
We would tread, like him, some path that leads
To gaining a deathless name;
And we sigh as our time is vainly spent,
"Oh, 't was not for *this* that I was meant!"

We feel, with a touch of deep regret,
What nothings, alas! we 've been;
How like a stagnant pool, as yet,
Has been to us Life's stream.
There seem'd to our souls a warning sent,—
"Mortal! for this thou wert not meant."

Yet we sit and dream of a better day,
And idly its coming wait,
When, like the hero of poet's lay,
We too may be something great;
And still through the mist our spirits grope,
For the distant gleam of this better hope.

For alas! while we dream these airy dreams,
And sigh for the better afar,
We are dwelling on that which only seems,
While we slight the truths that are.
We are looking for flowers more fair and sweet,
While we trample the fairest 'neath our feet.

The wearisome, lone, and monotonous lot,
Where To-day 's as the day that is gone;
Where To-morrow brings nothing To-day has not,
Nor evening the hopes of the morn;
Oh! even here, in the loneliest hours,
Are there lying some fair but neglected flowers.

Some being we gaze on from day to day,
And tend with a holy care,
Lightening the woes in each other's way,
Each breathing a mutual prayer.
Oh! here, in the homeliest act or speech,
May we to the fame of a hero reach.

For when selfish thoughts are for others subdued,
And smiles conquer the rising frown,
When we love our own in another's good,
Oh! we weave us a deathless crown,
That many a hero's, present or past,
With all its glory, has never surpass'd.

Oh! did we but see how in smallest things
Are beginnings of all that 's great,
Life's soil would be water'd by countless springs,
That now 'neath the surface wait.

We should feel that when earthward kindly sent,
For heroes and heroines all were meant.

One of the chief attributes of Miss Young's muse is its *cheerfulness.* There is no discontent, no peevishness, no fretfulness in her philosophy. Her very melancholy is healthy. The opening verses of *The World's Complaint* are very excellent in this respect: —

Through all the changes of unnumber'd years,
I've roll'd around the life-bestowing Sun;
Yet still each season fresh and bright appears
As when my onward course was first begun.
Spring with its new-born beauty does not shun,
Awakening as of old the sleepy earth;
And Summer in its brightness loseth none
Of all its early loveliness and worth.
Still blooms the flower, and glows the ripen'd fruit,
And through the ground the tender leaflets shoot.

And yet, alas! I long have been misnamed
A desert wilderness, — a worthless clod;
And man, vain man, is not a whit ashamed
Thus to abuse the bounty of his God:
And say that, till he rests beneath the sod,
There's nothing worthy of his noble thought;
But day by day he still must toil and plod;
And seek, but never find the object sought.
And me he calls a waste, a fleeting show, —
A dismal charnel-house for man below.

Ungrateful mortal! canst thou look around,
Upon the waving trees and meadows green?
Canst listen to the universal sound
Of joy and gladness filling every scene?
Canst see the stars benignant shine at e'en?
Canst feel the breeze refresh thy sullen brow,
And cherish still thy bosom's inward spleen?
Oh! haste at once thy stubborn will to bow.
Think! would such beauty be bestow'd on me,
If I were made to nourish misery?

* *

Come, now, and look upon my laughing face;
View the bright colours of the simplest flower;
The merry rivulet's meanderings trace
In the glad sunlight of the morning hour;
And, yielding to the soul-pervading power
That's deep enshrined in all created things,
See if thy gloomy visions dare to lower
Where e'en the insect in his gladness sings.
Look forth, and tell me where the spot appears
That should be called by man "the vale of tears."

There is great truth of the thought in the following finely expressed lines: —

OH! EVER THUS DO SUN AND SHADE.

Oh! did you list at morning to the merry bridal bell,
That stealing through the fields and woods, so soft and cheery fell?

And hear you now so mournfully the knell of parting life,
That minds you of some sever'd tie, — of husband, son, or wife?
Oh! ever thus do sun and shade
By turns this mortal life pervade.

And did you see the passing gloom upon the maiden's brow,
The silent tear upon her cheek? — And do you see her now,—
Her face lit up with sunny smiles, all radiant with delight,
Her eyes that beam with innocence, in Love's own beauty bright?
Oh! ever thus do sun and shade
By turns this mortal life pervade.

Night follows day, and day the night; the sun succeeds the shower;
And deepest gloom may hover near, to chase the sportive hour.
But though it darken for a time, sweet Hope will soon prevail,
As grateful calms will come to soothe where blew the boisterous gale?
For ever thus do sun and shade
By turns this mortal life pervade.

I know no writer who can employ familiar and homely images with more success and effect than Miss Young. The lines which I mark in italics in the fol-

lowing poem, afford a good proof of her power in this respect: —

EVENING.

How like *a tender mother*,
With loving thoughts beguiled,
Fond Nature seems to lull to rest
Each faint and weary child!
Drawing the curtain tenderly,
Affectionate and mild.

Hark! to the gentle lullaby
That through the trees is creeping,—
Those *sleepy trees* that nod their heads
Ere the moon as yet comes peeping,
Like a tender nurse, to see if all
Her little ones are sleeping.

One little fluttering bird,
Like a child in a dream of pain,
Has chirp'd and started up,
Then nestled down again.
Oh! a child and a bird, as they sink to rest,
Are as like as any twain.

The chief charm, however, in Miss Young's poetry, is its strong, earnest, hearty, human sympathies. She can feel for the meanes tof her species: and that most

honestly and nobly. There is a world of true charity and real philanthropy in these verses entitled —

THE POOR MAN'S FLOWER.

Wandering along his weary way,
In dirty tatters meanly dress'd,
A beggar-man one summer-day,
Seem'd hastening to some place of rest.
No smile was on his wither'd face,
It nought but anxious care exprest;
Grim Poverty had left its trace,
And inly rankled at his breast;
Yet in his coat that weary hour
The poor man nursed a cherished flower.

'T was no choice plant in hothouse bred,
And guarded with a tender care;
No hand had propp'd its drooping head,
Or shielded it from midnight air;
Yet choicest flowers might fail to bring
To their rich owners thoughts as fair,
As did that simple, lowly thing,
To that unhappy man of care,
Who from the hedge-side, free to all,
Had pluck'd himself that blossom small.

No flow'ret in a lady's dress,
Where all beside is meet and bright,
And she, in her own loveliness,
Seems but another flower of light,

Has aught so sacred or so dear,
So touching to the gazer's sight,
As that bright spot amongst the drear,
That star amidst the gloom of night; —
The flow'ret pluck'd by fingers rude,
To cheer the beggar's solitude.

On, on he pass'd, that human flower,
Whom men set foot on like a weed;
Yet, waiting for a kinder hour,
Within was many a precious seed.
The beggar's spirit, like his dress,
Might not be wholly fair, indeed;
Yet some bright bud of loveliness,
The germ of many a noble deed,
Did we but take the pains to find,
Blooms fresh in each neglected mind.

The simple plucking of that flower
Betray'd a tenderness of thought,
Ready to find in every hour
The kindred sweetness that it sought:
A sense of beauty seldom found
Where all within is darkly fraught,
But often trampled to the ground,
And mercilessly set at nought,
By those who in their selfish power
Treat as the weed what is the flower.

Yet brighter days begin to dawn;
The weeds of prejudice and pride,
Though slowly, yet are surely drawn,
From bosoms where they used to hide:

And, thou, poor scorn'd and wither'd flower,
With wealth and grandeur unallied,
Shalt see, ere long, the happy hour,
When men, from falseness purified,
Shall learn to estimate the worth
Of all the toiling sons of earth.

Miss Young's muse bears a strong resemblance to Mrs. Howitt's. It seems like a younger sister. It cannot, of course, be said that Miss Young as yet displays that calm consciousness of strength, and that exquisite perfection of style which so remarkably distinguish the poetry of Mrs. Howitt; but still the likeness is great. Both writers exhibit a pure simplicity of thought and feeling; both have a strong and refined sense of natural and moral beauty; both earnest, truthful, loving hearts; both fervently dedicate their powers to the service and welfare of humanity. And I venture to predict that in the course of a few years, when practice shall have matured, and experience ripened her genius, Miss Young will take a place in the estimation of the world, not very far below the great poetess to whom I have here compared her. She could not copy from a better model, or desire a prouder glory.

CONCLUSION.

The Compiler finds himself absolutely obliged here to close his labours. The size to which the Volume has grown beneath his hands, even now far transcends the usual dimensions of such a work; and to pursue the subject further at present, would be to tax most unwarrantably the patience of the reader, — which it is to be feared, has been too much tried already. At the same time he cannot but express his deep regret that the task he originally set himself should be left to a considerable extent unfinished. He has to pass over the works of many female writers of our own day, whose literary success claims for them a distinguished place among the poetic sisterhood. Lady Blessington, Lady Morgan, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Fletcher, Miss Pardoe, Miss Frances Brown, Lady Dufferin, Miss Drury, Miss Toulmin, Mrs. Ogilvie, Lady Emmeline Wortley, Lady Flora Hastings, Miss Iselin, and many other lady poets, whose names will probably occur to the reader, demand not merely a prominent but a lengthened notice.

The Author much wished to include also in his review those ladies who, though of transatlantic birth, may be said to be of British origin, and who write the English language, — Mrs. Hale, Miss Gould, Mrs. Mowatt,

Mrs. Sigourney, and the other female poets who are so favourably known in America; feeling sure that although the works of these writers might not come exactly within the title of the book, the reader would gladly pardon the introduction of their names.

He can only say, that should public favour encourage him to further labours in the same delightful field of study, it will be a source of sincere pleasure to him to continue the criticisms here interrupted, and to form as complete a memorial as possible of the Female Poets of our age and country.

THE END.

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